




LIBRARY
OF THE
UNIVERSITY
OF ILLINOIS

822
M 357
Ed. 1876
v. 2





Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2021 with funding from
University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

THE
DRAMATIC AND POETICAL WORKS
OF
WESTLAND MARSTON.

4

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

THE
DRAMATIC AND POETICAL WORKS
OF
WESTLAND MARSTON.



IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II.

COLLECTIVE EDITION.

London:
CHATTO AND WINDUS, PICCADILLY.
1876.

822
M357
Ed. 1876
Y. 2

PRINTED BY BALLANTYNE, HANSON AND CO.
EDINBURGH AND LONDON

CONTENTS OF VOLUME II.

	PAGE
DONNA DIANA	I
THE FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE	67
PURE GOLD	149
THE WIFE'S PORTRAIT	223
A HARD STRUGGLE	257
BOROUGH POLITICS	287
DRAMATIC SCENES AND FRAGMENTS	319
SONNETS	339
GENERAL POEMS	349

226492

DONNA DIANA.

A Comedy,

IN THREE ACTS.

*Adapted, and to a great extent rewritten, from the German
version of Moreto's "El Desden con El Desden."*

Donna Diana.

First performed at the PRINCESS'S THEATRE, in December 1863.

CHARACTERS.

DON DIEGO, <i>Sovereign Duke of</i> <i>Barcelona,</i>	Mr E. HOOPER.
DON CÆSAR, <i>Prince of Urgel,</i> .	Mr HERMANN VEZIN.
DON LUIS, <i>Prince of Béarne,</i> .	Mr H. FORRESTER.
DON GASTON, <i>Count of Foix,</i> .	Mr DAVID FISHER.
PERIN, <i>secretary and confidant of</i> <i>the Princess Diana,</i> . . .	Mr GEORGE VINING.
DONNA DIANA, <i>hereditary Princess</i> <i>of Barcelona, daughter of Don</i> <i>Diego,</i>	Mrs HERMANN VEZIN.
DONNA LAURA, } <i>nieces of Don Diego,</i> {	{ Miss C. CARSON.
DONNA FENISA, }	{ Miss E. BARNETT.
FLORETTA, <i>woman of the chamber</i> <i>to Donna Diana,</i>	Miss R. POWELL.
<i>Nobles, Musicians, Court Servants, &c., &c.</i>	

Scene—Barcelona. Period—That of Barcelona's independency.

DONNA DIANA.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Interior of the Ducal Palace at Barcelona. Second room at back seen through an archway. DON CÆSAR is seated in first room lost in thought. PERIN watches him from inner room, then advances some steps.

Perin. [Aside.] Again alone, and lost in reverie—
Sad reverie too, if looks reveal the heart !
'Tis even as I guessed : he is in love.

[DON CÆSAR sighs.]

There was a sigh. Poor prince, he's touched indeed !
I must have pity on him. I, who probe
His malady so well, may find its cure.

Don C. [Apart.] A being like herself ! The fair outside

Of woman, but without a woman's heart—
She to enslave me ! 'Tis intolerable.

Perin. [Aside.] Yes, 'tis of her whose beauty, cold as stone,

Attracts from all the love she but disdains—

'Tis of Diana that he speaks. [*Comes forward.*] Good day,

Most noble prince.

Don C. [Who starts perplexed.] Who's there ?

Perin. -

If I intrude,

Forgive me.

Don C. [Rousing himself.] Perin ! You're my countryman,

And always welcome.

Perin. You greet me cheerfully ; a minute since I hardly thought you gay. But this is well ; You can control yourself, and mask your heart.

Don. C. What do you mean ? I scarcely understand you.

Perin. Think twice, my lord, ere you evade me.
Trouble

That's told finds outlet, and, it may be, help ;

Will you confide in me ? May I presume

To say that you are—— [Hesitates.]

Don C. Perin, what ?

Perin. In love.

Don C. In love !

Perin. If I have eyes, if plain effects denote Their cause, and if where smoke is must be fire, I say you are in love.

Don C. [Eagerly.] Have you been sent On a commission to me ? Speak !

Perin. On none
Save that which my heart dictates. To be brief,
I love you well—a gallant prince, nor less
Courteous than brave, and my dear countryman.
Follow my counsel, and the goal you seek
With fainting steps itself will come to meet you.

Don C. [After a pause, taking his hand confidently.]

Perin, I trust you.

Perin. [After looking cautiously round.] 'Tis conceded, then,

That you're in love. With whom ? Fenisa ? Laura ?
No, no ; 'tis with Diana, the duke's daughter,
And heiress of this realm. Well, well, my prince,
You share the fate of all men who behold
That beauteous petrification.

Don C. 'Tis enchantment,
'Tis sorcery—this pride of hers that charms
Even while it wounds. I would resist, but cannot.

Perin. Pride can work wonders, sir. Of that anon.
But tell me, have you loved her long ? How chanced it ?

Don C. The rumour of Diana's singular
Contempt of men, and of her father's wish
That she should marry, reached me in my home.
My cousins, the Count de Foix and the Prince of Béarne,
Eager to win this prize, would oft discuss
Their chances at my father's court. I, heedless,
Heard them at first, but, won by their persuasions,
And curious to see this fair disdain,
Came with them hither to the tournament.
I saw Diana, and remained unmoved.
True, she was fair, but though her mien was noble,
It still repelled. My friend, I loved not then.
Ere long the tournament began, and Fortune
Smiled on my lance. Mine was the victor's lot
In every conflict, mine the name the crowd .
Hailed with their shouts. Curious, I raised my eyes
To where Diana, 'midst her ladies, sat,
And then methought that even in *her* face
Shone the approval beauty deigns to valour.
Mark, that was the beginning.

Perin.

Good, I note you.

Don C. A moment, and the bright look fled, replaced
By chill indifference. Her coldness spurred me
To further prowess. I performed that day
Feats that surprised myself. From all the throng
Loud acclamations burst, till Echo's self
Pealed back and swelled them. But amidst this hom-
age

Still colder grew Diana's look. She sat,
As might a statue in the din of crowds,
Severe, immovable, but how majestic !
At length her eye met mine, and my fixed gaze
She answered with a look of utter scorn,
As though she had demeaned herself to mark
The pigmy deeds of men. I left the lists
Incensed, confounded, but by some strange magic
Enthralled past cure, and from that day to this
Have been no more Don Cæsar.

Perin. 'Twas her *pride*, then,
That woke your love.

Don C. It was ; my heart's a riddle !
What should repel attracts ; because her foot
Spurns me, I kneel to kiss it ; yes, her scorn,
That ought to freeze me, kindles in my heart
A fire of love—I say a very fire,
That, spite of shame and reason, still consumes me.

Perin. Highly poetical ! But, in plain terms,
You're like the rest. The thing you *have* you prize not ;
The thing you *cannot* have, you *therefore* prize.
It is unlucky, though, that you have set
Your heart upon a statue. Better far
Your choice had lit upon the lady's cousin,
Donna Fenisa—ay, or Laura. Both
Are fair and amiable, flesh and blood,
And find the world the pleasanter for men,
Whose presence here Diana thinks the grand
Mistake of Nature.

Don C. Name her with respect.

Perin. She is my gracious mistress, but still
I may lament the flaw in her which mars
What else were perfect. 'Tis said that in her girlhood
Two princes wooed her. Policy, not love,
Inspired their suit. With insight past her years
She read their selfish aims, and thus conceived
Contempt for all our sex. Now so extreme
This mood has grown, she shuns, when possible,
The sight of us ; love-songs are discord to her ;
The pictures on her walls show Beauty flying
Our loathed pursuit. 'Tis thus she spites the *men*,
And of the *women* she would make Medusas
Like to herself.

Don C. What can be hoped then ?

Perin. Much.
She's still a woman : women love to please.

Don C. But she despises homage.

Perin. Yes, because

She surfeits on it. Prince, be ruled by me ;
Withhold from her the tribute others pay,
Deny that food of praise which palls on her
From its abundance. Keep her fasting, sir,
Until she feels a woman's natural hunger :—
That's love for man.

Don C. [*Surprised.*] Perin !

Perin.

Think how *you* fared.

Her pride subdued you. Be more proud than she,
And conquer her.

Don C. Proud, when I love !

Perin.

The more

You merit hiding love.

Don C. I cannot hide it.

Perin. Then give her up.

Don C. I cannot give her up.

Perin. You're very reasonable. [*Ironically.*]

Don C. What must I do ?

Perin. I have already said—

Be prudent, self-possessed, above all—*cold.*

Don C. Cold ! cold to *her* !

Perin. It is your only chance.

Don C. [*After a pause of reflection.*] I half believe it.—
Come, then ; I'll make the effort, though it rend me.

Perin. I shall be near to aid. But mark me, prince,
Let none suspect that I'm in league with you.

At court here I am held a woman-hater,
A boor, a foe to wedlock, and, in short,
A convert to my lady's creed. 'Twas thus,
When first I came here a poor gentleman,
I won her smiles, became her secretary.

Don C. [*Archly.*] Thou art a rogue.

Perin.

Say, sir, a politician.

And yet, 'tis droll. There's here a little wretch,
By name Floretta. Prince, she dotes on me,
For no cause save the surliness I feign.
There's hope again for you. At times her lip,
So ripe and pouting, and her roguish eye,

Tempt me to hug her, but then Prudence cries—
Caution!—and I mask fondness still with rudeness.
Follow my cue, and—stay, here come the duke
And your two cousins. Courage now; remember
Your game's indifference. Thus alone you win.

Don C. I am resolved: now let the game begin.

Enter DON DIEGO, DON LUIS, and DON GASTON.

PERIN is seen from time to time listening in the back-ground.

Don D. With sorrow, princes, I confess the slight
Put on you by my daughter. I fondly hoped,
Both for my people's good and for her own,
That she would choose at last some worthy spouse;
Yet she's inflexible, and but this day
Avowed to me she'd meet the embrace of Death
Rather than brook a husband's.

Don L. Sir, despair not;
Her strange delusion cannot long endure.

Don G. [*Complacently.*] Impossible, let *me* but speak
with her.

Don D. I dare not give you hope. Methinks 'twere
well,
Though eight days of the tournament remain,
That it were closed at once.

Don L. Not so, my lord:
I came to win your daughter. In eight days
I with a scanty band have stormed a fort.
Are women more impregnable than forts?

Don D. Yes, sir; a fort yields to the assailer's will,
A woman must be taken with her own.

Don C. [*With assumed indifference.*] I grant, great
duke, 'twas rather chance than love
That brought *me* here; yet courtesy compels me
To stay the appointed time.

Don D. So be it then.
The games shall still proceed. The boon you seek

My daughter will oppose, but 'tis your due,
And shall be granted.

Don G. Thanks, sir. [*Aside.*] How I long
For the sweet war of words. The enemy
Who braves my sword is safer than the woman
Who braves my tongue.

Don D. I'll now prepare the princess
For your approach, and shortly summon you.

Don L. A thousand thanks, your highness.

[*DUKE goes out.*]

Don G. We've gained the outworks: now for the
assault

Upon the citadel. [*To DON CÆSAR.*] You're silent,
cousin,

Does your heart fail?

Don C. [*Carelessly.*] Why should it fail? I'm with
you,

But 'tis the sport of the adventure tempts me ;
I care not for the prize.

Don G. And *she* that prize !

Not care for her—the peerless, proud Diana !

Then, man, thy youth is but a dress to hide

A grey-beard's heart. 'Tis snow that fills thy veins ;

Thy sharp breath chills me, and I catch the ague

Even while I talk. Come, Luis, I must needs

Bask in the sun to warm me. Farewell, stoic !

[*Apart to DON LUIS.*] Let us discuss our plans. On
one of us

Her choice must fall. [*Aside.*] And if she be not
blind,

I know on whom. [*To DON CÆSAR.*] Adieu, my
patriarch ! [*Goes out, laughing, with DON LUIS.*]

Don C. O happy moth, that flutters round the light

Unconscious of his danger ! I alone

Know what attracts me fatal. I shall see her—

See the exalted look, the noble gestures

That mark her separate—single 'mid her kind.

Hope fails ; my brain's bewildered. How behold her

And feign indifference? From such a struggle
What can I gain?

Perin. [*Hurrying forward.*] Gain! why, a wayward
woman,

And Barcelona's throne. All will work well
If you resolve it shall. Believe and conquer.
No doubtful dallying. To the princess straight!

Don C. Ah, friend, you do not feel!

Perin. No more must you;

At least not yet. Keep down your *feelings*, prince,
As soldiers on forced marches keep down hunger.
The fight won, they may eat and you may feel.
Till then be cold—cold till, benumbed by frost,
She begs for fire!

Don C. Perin, thy words revive me.

No more I falter. Victory's happy chance
Lies by one path. I take it, and advance. [*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

Drawing-room of PRINCESS DIANA.

DONNA DIANA, DONNA FENISA, DONNA LAURA, *seated*;
*the two former engaged in embroidery, the last with
a book.*

Donna D. Read on, dear Laura.

Donna L. [*Reading.*] With love's fierce heat *Apollo*
Daphne woos,

Yet cannot melt her scorn, though god of light;
Colder she flies as quicker he pursues,
Till, lo! the laurel hides her from his sight.

Donna D. 'Tis well expressed.

Donna L. I think the style affected.

Donna D. Exalted, rather, as befits the theme.

Read on.

Donna L. [*Reading.*] A noble heart doth vulgar bents
despise,

*Rocklike it sees the waves of passion beat ;
In proud repose it doth itself suffice,
And spurns love's vain illusion and deceit.*

Donna D. 'Tis excellent.

Donna F. But still——

Donna D. Still what ?

Donna F. 'Tis hard

That we must hate love ere we know its name.

Donna D. Would you be burnt before you shun the fire ?

Donna F. I'd run the risk ; the danger might be great,
But not so great as—— [*Hesitates.*]

Donna D. [*Sternly.*] Well ?

Donna F. As the enjoyment.

Donna L. [*Aside.*] Imprudent girl ! This to her face !

Donna D. [*Rising and speaking sternly.*] Fenisa,
Reflect another time to whom you speak.
Rule your tongue better, girl, or else be silent :
If not, avoid my presence. Make your choice.

Enter PERIN.

You, Perin ?

Perin. How ! your highness is displeased ?

Donna D. Displeased, sir, and alarmed.

Perin. O, wherefore ?

Donna D. Ask not.

Perin. [*To FENISA and LAURA.*] Speak, ladies !

What has thus vexed my mistress ?

Donna L. O, a word——

An idle word dropped by my sister here.

Perin. What word ?

Donna L. [*With assumed timidity.*] She talked of love.

Perin. [*Pretending to be shocked.*] Of love ! Is it possible ?

But not in praise of it ?

Donna D. In praise of it ;

And in broad daylight, Perin.

Perin. I'm amazed !
Could she so far forget herself? Forgive me
If I presume ; the very name of love
Throws me into a fever.

Donna F. I but said
What I must think,—that we should prove love evil
Ere we condemn it.

Donna D. Foolish child, be warned
By others' punishment, and so escape
The scourge yourself. Twice was I sought in wedlock
When a mere girl. What vows, what flatteries
My suitors lavished ! Had these counterfeits
Been genuine coin, their tongues had squandered on me
Whole mines of love. But then a question rose—
A mere chance question—What would be my dowry ?
So many thousand ducats? Less by half,
My father said. Then vanished suitor one ;
The next assumed—('twas by mere accident
He named the trifle)—that our Barcelona
Would in his quarrels fight or just or unjust ?
No, said my father. Straight my second suitor
Fled like the first. To these men what was I ?
A human soul, quick with the breath of heaven ?
No ; a mere title-deed to wealth and power—
A poor appendage to the goods of fortune,
Which should have been appendages to me.

Donna L. They wronged you much.

Donna D. They *served* me. From the first
I saw their aims. They but confirmed in me
The love I felt before for single life,
And all the charms of high philosophy.

Enter FLORETTA hurriedly.

Flo. Your father, lady, with the princes comes.

Donna D. [*Aside.*] What ! with the princes ? Though
he threatened this,
I scarce believed him.

Donna F. [To FLORETTA.] So Don Gaston comes?

Flo. Yes.

Donna L. And Don Luis?

Flo.

With Don Cæsar, too!

Donna D. [To PERIN.] Am I to be invaded thus—
deprived

Of privacy and freedom—doomed, perhaps,
To hateful marriage!

Perin. Princess, none would dare

To force your hand. They do but mean to reason.

Submit, then. Can their puny arguments

Shake in an hour your firm philosophy,

The work of years? O, fear not.

Donna D. [Who, after taking a few steps in meditation, returns.] Let them come,

And learn whom they assail.

[She sits by the table, takes a book and reads. Her air
is resolute and noble.]

Donna L. [Apart to FENISA.] We soon shall see.

Don Luis, then; he has a noble bearing.

Donna F. None of the three would come amiss to me.

Flo. [Aside to PERIN, pleasantly.] Good morning,
Perin.

Perin. [Sharply.] You've said that before,
To-day.

Flo. What then?

Perin. There's no need to repeat it.

Flo. Why should you be so sullen? While the
princes

Engage our mistress, take a turn with me.

Perin. A turn with you! For what?

Flo. For cheerful gossip.

We're all so silent here, I soon shall lose

The use of speech.

Perin. Pray that you may, for then

You'll be endurable.

Flo. You wretch! you bear!

[Goes out indignantly.]

Perin. How charming is she ! Bear's an ugly name ;
 But on that rosy mouth abuse itself
 Should be stopped but with kisses. If I dared—
 But no ; beneath the rule of our strict goddess,
 A kiss were sacrilege. Well, patience ! patience !
 I have a score against her. She shall pay it.

[Goes out, with a grimace at DONNA DIANA.]

Enter DON DIEGO.

Don D. *[At door.]* Princes, this way.

[The Princes enter, one after the other, DON CÆSAR last. DONNA DIANA rises to meet her father. The Princes make a low bow to DONNA DIANA and her Cousins, which all the ladies return. DONNA DIANA, however, bows but slightly, then averts her face.]

Don C. *[Aside, with evident emotion.]* Enchantress !
 Can I gaze

Upon her and dissemble ?

Don D. Daughter !

Donna D. Sir,

I wait your pleasure.

Don D. 'Tis that you receive

These princes with due hospitality.

My honoured guests, with reason they complain

That you avoid them.

Donna D. Father, to the point.

Let me say briefly this—my will to yours

Must be subservient. I recoil from marriage

More than from death. But as you gave me life,

'Tis yours to take. Determine as you please.

Don D. You misconceive me, child. 'Tis not of
 marriage

I speak. Love must be free, but courtesy

Is due to all. Explain, then, to the princes

That your philosophy—not pride—impels you

To shun their suit. Maintain your strange opinions

With suavity and reason. Of my daughter
I ask no more : she cannot grant me less. *[Goes out.]*

Donna D. [After a pause.] Speak, gentlemen, what is
it you require?

Don L. Princess, your confidence. If none among us
May win your love, then teach us by what arts
Love may be conquered.

*[DIANA signs gravely to them to be seated, and sits
down.]*

Don G. Say for what transgression
Is poor love driven from paradise—thy breast.
Looking on *thee*, it seems unnatural ;
And, wouldst thou look on *us* and weigh our merits,
'Twould seem impossible.

*[DIANA listens with an amused expression, which at
length changes to contempt.]*

Don C. I, too, would hear
Your reasons, princess, though I half incline
Already to your cause. I love my freedom,
And you may soon persuade me, should you deign,
To think a single life the best of fates.

*[DIANA becomes attentive, looks at him with some little
astonishment, then turns her head quickly away.]*

Donna F. [Apart to LAURA.] How liked you that?

Donna L. [Apart to FENISA.] Amazingly ; he's proud,
And therefore dangerous.

Don G. Silence for the princess.

Donna D. [With grave dignity.] Since I *must* speak,
I'll nothing hide. First, think how short is life.
What are life's worthy aims ? You'll tell me—Virtue,
Wisdom, the general good. Now, if I ask
The sages and all history what most
Wars with these aims, they answer, that poor weakness
Born of the senses—love ; that childish impulse
Which children make a god. Seen in itself,
Love moves my laughter, seen in its effects,
Mirth becomes terror. What has love made man ?
A tyrant. And what woman ? Why, a slave.

Add to all this the vices that beset
The path of love, as flattery, deceit,
Strife, jealousy, revenge, and can you wonder
That I recoil ? *[A short pause.]*
My name's Diana, and my blood is royal.
I would be worthy both. Know, therefore, princes,
That love is alien to me. Your esteem
I prize : your suit I must perforce refuse.
A different planet ruled us at our births,
And we are wide apart as world from world !
[She bows graciously.]

Donna L. *[To FENISA.]* It sounds well.

Donna F. So it ought ; 'tis *only* sound.

Don G. *[Eagerly.]* Let *me* speak, princes.

[Embarrassed by the look of DONNA DIANA.]

Hem ! I think, Don Luis,
I'll leave the cause to you. I shall reserve
My speech for greater need. When I *do* speak,
Then let her tremble.

Don C. *[Seriously.]* Pray proceed, Don Luis.
I've nought to urge ; the princess has convinced me.

[DIANA looks at him with astonishment.]

Don L. Then, princess, hear me.
Those evils you denounce spring not from love,
For love is generous, but from selfish passion.
You quote the sages ; I the human heart,
Which tells that, in all periods, love has reigned
Supreme o'er man. And, pardon me, it seems
That you distrust your cause, withdrawing thus
From love's assault. If you have courage, show it.
Let us encounter you in pleasant warfare,
Let all be lawful that a knight may ask,
A lady grant. Should a true heart subdue you,
Even your defeat were gain, and if *you* conquer,
Be named Diana the Invincible,
And we will bear your fame from pole to pole.

Donna F. *[Apart to LAURA.]* Most fair ! most reason-
able !

Donna L. [*Surprised, apart to FENISA.*] She consents.

Donna D. [*Rising.*] You wish it so? Then I accept your challenge.

War is declared. To-night we hold a masque ;
There be the conflict tried. Use every art
That cunning prompts, and ply me with all weapons
That tongue or eye can furnish. I will meet you.

Don L. Never did richer prize or greater peril
Engage a soldier. Friends, let each one show
That he is worthy of so fair a foe.

[*He bows profoundly to the ladies, then goes out.*]

Don G. Princess, prepare yourself for my attack.
You'll need your wits. Howe'er the stars decide,
I do not quit this court without my bride.

[*Bows, and goes out. DIANA gives a light laugh, and remains standing, as if in abstraction.*]

Donna L. [*Apart to FENISA.*] The game proceeds.

Donna F. [*Apart to LAURA.*] It interests the players ;
But 'tis dull sport, methinks, to lookers on.

Don C. [*Rising, and speaking aside with suppressed emotion.*] Now love befriend me !

Donna L. [*To FENISA.*] Hush ! Don Cæsar speaks.

Don C. [*Approaching DIANA gravely.*] 'Twould ill
befit me, princess, as a knight,

To shun this mimic war. I cannot vie
With others in their transports, but still hope
My homage, though less ardent, may be welcome.

Donna D. [*Looking up surprised.*] What is't you say ?

Don C. I think of love as you do—
That 'tis degrading, enervating, vain.
Indeed, I long have held your own opinions,
But still more strictly. I can neither love
Nor bear to be beloved.

Donna D. [*Forcing a smile.*] Is there much danger,
Think you, of that ?

Don C. O, none. That's none to *me*.
The most seductive charms that woman boasts
Would leave *me* cold. But what if I should rouse

In *her* a passion I could ne'er requite ?
That were unjust, indeed. I'm therefore frank.

Donna D. Why do you pay me court then ?

Don C.

To evince

My deep esteem. It were uncourteous
To stand aloof when others proffer homage.

Donna D. There's no *love* in the case then ?

Don C. [*With great gravity.*] Not the least.

Donna D. [*Astonished.*] Would you not marry ?

Don C. Some day, *for convenience.*

My court a mistress needs, my throne an heir.

Yes, I *may* take a wife, but not for love.

Donna D. [*Apart to FENISA.*] You hear the coxcomb.

Is he not absurd ?

Donna F. [*Apart to DIANA.*] He's proud.

Donna D. [*Apart to her.*] Say arrogant.

Why, 'twould appear

He came here to defy me ! [*Apart to LAURA.*] Were't
not sport

To make this fop, spite of himself, enamoured ?

Donna L. That might be dangerous.

Donna D. To whom ?

Donna L. To you.

You are but human.

Donna D. What ! Do you pretend

That *I* could stoop to love—to love for *him* ?

I, whom prayers move not, vanquished by disdain !

Laura, you are a greater fool than he.

Donna L. Well, you are warned.

Donna D. [*Aside, excitedly.*] I'll punish this vain pride.

[*She turns pleasantly to DON CÆSAR, who stands
as if abstracted.*]

I rejoice, prince, to hear your sentiments,
And thank you for them.

Don C. [*Still seeming absent.*] Why ?

Donna D. Because with *you*

I can converse in freedom, with no risk

That you should love me.

Don C. If for *this* you thank me,
I shall deserve your thanks.

Donna D. [Laughing.] Good, very good.

PERIN *enters, observed by* DIANA.

Don C. Still, to *yourself* take heed. The firmest woman
May overrate her firmness when with man ;
Deem me not rude then, but considerate,
In warning you from peril. If I catch
The slightest sign of love, I must avoid you.

Donna D. Avoid me !

Don C. Not for my sake, for your own.

Donna D. [Aside.] Insufferable, matchless vanity !
[*Aloud, sarcastically.*] You could not be so cruel ! Do
not fear.

Don C. We understand each other then ?

Donna D. [Rather excitedly.] Most fully.
You may go satisfied.—Perin !

[PERIN *approaches her quickly and officiously. She
whispers a few words to him.*]

Don C. Princess,
Until to-night, farewell.

[*He makes a serious bow, which DIANA returns. He
then retires slowly but stops short.*]

Donna D. [With irritation, apart to LAURA.] You
shall yet see him
In love to madness.

Donna L. O poor wretch, he's doomed
If *you* take arms ! [*Apart to FENISA.*] 'Twill happen
otherwise

I think. Then *we* may find a chance.

Donna F. Heaven grant it.

Donna D. Not gone, prince ?

Don C. No, but going.

Donna D. [Ironically.] Really going !
Have you the heart ? Will you not change your mind ?
Think twice, and fall in love.

Don C. [*Quietly.*] What then would happen?

Donna D. [*Haughtily.*] Your prompt and ignominious rejection.

Perin, a word with you. [*Speaks to him apart.*] Good morning, prince.

[*She bows somewhat disdainfully, and goes out followed by DONNAS LAURA and FENISA.*]

Perin. [*To DON C.*] Well done! Well done! I'm proud of you.

Don C. O *Perin*,

I love her more than ever! To disguise it

Is past my power. My resolution melts,

My strength forsakes me. [*Leans on a chair for support.*]

Perin. Had another sworn

Don Cæsar spoke thus, I had not believed it.

What! when you've fired her pride—forced her to parley!

Even now she bade me follow her to take

Some weighty charge. I'll wager it concerns you.

Keep then in doors, and you shall quickly learn

Her plan of battle. Why to fail were monstrous,

Her game exposed, her tactics in your hand!

Good, good, you rally! Courage, prince! [*Goes out.*]

Don C. He breathes

A second life into me. I'll not yield.

No flight! I win or perish on the field!

[*Goes out opposite side from PERIN.*]

ACT II., SCENE I.

State Apartments in the Ducal Palace.

An Inner Room open.

Enter PERIN, who looks around cautiously, sees DON CÆSAR outside, dressed for the masque, and beckons to him.

Don C. [*Entering.*] Well, friend, what tidings have you?

Perin. Rare ones, rare ones!

My system answers to perfection.

Don C.

Well?

Perin. Her little brain's already turned : she's bent
To make you mad with love. In fine, *her* mind
Is firmly set to drive you out of *yours*.

Don C. What would she gain by that ?

Perin. Gain ! the delight
Of bringing you distracted to her feet,
And thus requiting your disdain with hers.
Now is't not sport, 'tis on *my* help she builds ?
But she must be at hand. Prepare yourself
To meet her blandishments, and for heaven's sake
Remember all are feigned ; so spoil her witchcraft.
Be cold ; if need be, rude.

Don C. Will the scheme answer ?

Perin. Will fish take bait ? 'Twill tame her. Quickly
then

She'll bow before her conqueror, for love
That springs from vanquished pride has few gradations,
But goes *crescendo*. If at ten o'clock
She but pretends to love, and you respond not,
Eleven will see her love in earnest ; twelve,
If you keep firm, beholds her almost crazed
With torment and with longing ; and at one
She's on her knees : you've but to order bride-cake.
I do not jest : these are true tactics, prince.

Don C. O 'tis a fierce ordeal. She all softness,
Can I be stern ? [*PERIN makes a sigh of impatience.*]
Don't fear, I'll not relapse.

Perin. 'Tis bravely said. [*Then confidentially and
emphatically.*] Now for reward, I'll tell you
A scheme of hers. 'Tis at this masque the custom
That every lady takes a knight by lot.
Each fair one has a ribbon of some colour
Which she conceals ; each knight a colour names,
And she who has it to that knight belongs
For all the masque. He's free—nay, more, he's *bound*
To woo her favour by all flattering arts.
No less is looked for. On *her* side, the beauty
Must show like courtesy, and grant her knight

All fair requests. *Now guess her first manœuvre.*
 She with her cousins has contrived it so
 That you—*whatever* colour you may choose—
 Fall to *her* share. Well, see you not in that
 The chance she gives you? [*Looking off.*] Hist, she
 comes!

Don C. [*Aside, disturbed.*] She comes!

Perin. Sport round the light, prince; mind you fly not
 in it. [*Hurries into inner room.*]

Don C. I tremble still. I cannot meet her yet.

[*Follows PERIN into inner room.*]

*Enter at side DONNA DIANA, DONNA LAURA, DONNA
 FENISA, and FLORETTA, according to their rank, in
 rich ball dresses. DON CÆSAR and PERIN, in the
 saloon at back, are visible at intervals to audience.*

Donna D. [*With pleasant liveliness to her cousins.*] So
 shall it be; let there be no mistake:
 Choose whom you please, but leave to me Don Cæsar.
 'Tis easily arranged: I've all the colours.

Donna F. And so have I.

Donna L.

And I.

Flo.

I, too, have all.

Donna D. [*Complacently to herself.*] Presumptuous
 fool! thou shalt not now escape!

A thousand meshes will I weave around thee.

Donna F. [*Apart to LAURA.*] I take Don Gaston's
 colour.

Donna L. You are welcome.

We will divide the spoil, as sisters should.

I choose Don Luis.

Flo. [*Who has overheard them, merrily.*] I don't envy
 you.

My part's allotted. Perin, thou art caught,
 At least for once.

Donna D. [*Who has seated herself, observing PERIN.*]
 Perin!

Perin. [*Quickly and dutifully approaching her.*] What would your highness? [*They converse apart.*]

Donna D. [*Smiling.*] Have you yet seen the man?

Perin. I have, and tried

To sound him.

Donna D. Well; think you he can resist?

Perin. Yes; as the oak the zephyr. If he fall,
He must be undermined.

Donna D. He shall be so.

The victory ours, count on five thousand ducats.

Perin. Five thousand ducats! I'll do more than man
With such a hope. He's tottering already.

Donna D. Once prostrate, I will pay his scorn with
scorn.

Don C. [*Who has overheard her, aside.*] Ah! cruel
one! Nay, then, I cast off fear

And turn to action. [*Advances some steps.*]

Perin. [*To DONNA DIANA.*] See, see, the foe! I'll fall
upon his rear.

[*He draws himself somewhat back, giving DON
CÆSAR a sign to come nearer.*]

Donna D. [*To her cousins.*] Be on your guard.—To
the saloon, Floretta.

See that all's rightly ordered.

Flo. Yes, your highness.

[*She passes close by PERIN, and makes him a pleasant
courtesy, to which he replies by a surly grimace.*]

She then goes into saloon at back.

Don C. [*Coming forward to DONNA DIANA with a
grave bow.*] I am first, it seems,

In this night's duties.

Donna D. [*With slight raillery, but amiably.*] You are
most exact;

Surprisingly for one who shrinks from love.

Don C. Where the heart's free, we're stricter in respect.

Donna D. [*With increased amiability.*] Trust me, I
don't mistake your courtesy;

But still you have my thanks.

Don C. I don't deserve them.
I'm punctual by habit.

Donna D. [*Coaxingly.*] Must I think, then,
You'd no wish to oblige me?

Don C. [*Off his guard, and with involuntary feeling.*]
Who could see you,
And not feel that?

Perin. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR.*] A thousand times too
warm.
[*Apart to DIANA.*] He's melting fast. [*Apart again to*
DON CÆSAR.] Ice, ice, I say.

Donna D. [*Apart to PERIN.*] What did you whisper to
him?

Perin. Only that graciousness like yours deserved
A fit return.

Donna D. [*Apart to him.*] Quite right. [*Aloud, and*
very confidently to DON CÆSAR.] I owe you, prince,
Some reparation for harsh words to-day.
At first I thought you rude; but now I see,
Like me, you're frank by nature. It is strange
How much our views and feelings are alike!
I've shunned men hitherto; but you, methinks,
Might almost reconcile me to your sex.

[*DONNA FENISA signs to DONNA LAURA, who smiles*
and lays her finger on her lips.

Don C. Princess, beware!

Donna D. [*Surprised.*] Beware!

Don C. Of the first impulse
To look on me too kindly. Who can tell
Where it might lead you?

Donna D. Where?

Don C. I know not. Still,
Great ends have small beginnings: the rill spreads
Into the river, the neglected spark
Into a fire; and so your kindness
Might grow (mind, I say *might*)—might grow to love.

Donna D. [*Archly.*] What if it should?

Don C. You would repent of it.

Donna D. [*In a bland tone.*] Are you quite sure of that?

Don C. It must be so,
Since *I* should still remain indifferent.

Donna D. [*Mortified.*] You're candid, sir; most candid.

Don C. Very like.

I never studied falsehood.

Perin. [*Laughing aside.*] Then you had
The gift from nature. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR.*] Bravo,
prince! that told.

Donna L. [*Apart to FENISA.*] Heavens! what a man!

Donna F. [*Apart to LAURA.*] Delicious! I could eat
him.

Donna D. [*Apart to PERIN.*] Perin, what can I do?
The creature's iron.

Perin. Get up the furnace to white heat, and melt him.

Donna D. [*Resuming her former pleasant manner.*] Don
Cæsar, modesty is scarce your fault.

'Tis usual for men to feign some deference
When they contend with ladies.

Don C. How, your highness?

Contend! Did I not utter your own doctrine,
That love is childish, wisdom's direst foe;
The source of man's injustice, woman's bondage,
Of flattery, folly, strife, deceit, revenge?
These were your very words. I could not mend them.

[*Bows.*]

Perin. [*Aside.*] Excellent! He's a prodigy.

[*FENISA and LAURA signify their astonishment by
gestures to each other.*]

Donna D. [*Suppressing her vexation.*] As to love,
We may have gone too far, prince.

Don C. I'm so cold

By nature that *I* never go too far.

Perhaps your highness may. [*Significantly.*]

Donna D. *I!* [*Aside.*] Insolent!

Though it cost life, I'll have thee at my feet.

[*Music heard in saloon at back.*]

Flo. [*Who re-enters hastily.*] All is prepared, your highness, and the princes
Even now approach.

Donna D. [*Still heated, apart to her cousins.*] Look to the colours; mind
That you mistake not.

Donna L. We'll take heed.

Donna F. [*Attempting to restrain her laughter.*] O, surely.

Donna D. [*Sharply.*] Why do you simper, child? It misbecomes you.

Perin. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR.*] Prince, I congratulate you.

Don C. [*Apart to him.*] O my friend,
My tortures but commence.

Perin. [*Apart to him.*] Think of the prize;
Let that sustain you.

Enter DON LUIS and DON GASTON in splendid ball dresses. They are led in by the Master of the Ceremonies. Several Court Servants and Musicians follow, whom the Master of the Ceremonies shows to their places.

Don L. [*Bowing profoundly to DONNA DIANA.*] Princess, 'twixt hope and fear I hither come
To take my part: may Fortune smile on me.

Don G. [*Bowing to DIANA.*] No fear have I: she smiles on the stout heart.

Donna D. [*With pleasant composure.*] You know what duties and what privileges
This masque accords to you. The dame you win
Expects your court, and tenders you her favour,
Each of you has a lover's privilege
For this night only. Come, demand your colours!

Don L. [*Advancing to centre.*] Fortune is queen of this solemnity:
I therefore choose her favourite colour—*green.*

Donna L. [*Who with some confusion selects and displays a green ribbon.*] Here, then, is green: I am with you, Don Luis.

Don L. [*Aside.*] 'Sdeath, I have missed the prize! [*Rising and approaching* DONNA LAURA.] I can't complain,

Gaining so fair a partner.

[*He kneels to* DONNA LAURA, *who attaches the green ribbon to his dress. Flourish of trumpets. The Master of the Ceremonies conducts them to* DONNA DIANA, *who gives each of them a mask. They retire and sit.*]

Don G. [*Advancing to centre.*] Fortune's self
Is slave to Love. I ask Love's colour—red.

Donna F. [*Nervously selecting and displaying a red ribbon.*] Prince, I have red; you fall then to my share.

Don G. [*Aside.*] Confusion, I have lost my aim!
[*Aloud.*] Believe me most proud and happy. [*Approaching* DONNA FENISA.]

Lady, Chance thus fulfils Love's dear behests:
She gives me you.

[*He kneels to her: same business as before in the case of* LUIS *and* LAURA.]

Flo. Now, Perin, 'tis your turn.

Perin. Mine! Are you mad?

Flo. [*To* DIANA.] May it please your highness, Perin
Won't draw his colour.

Donna D. Perin, none are free
From this night's duties. You must e'en comply.

Perin. I play the lover! The mere thought is worm-wood.

Must I indeed? Is there no help for it?

[DONNA DIANA expresses dissent.]

Well, since I hate love as I hate the fiend,
If I must choose at all, give me the colour
Of the fiend's livery—black.

Flo. [*Selecting and displaying a black ribbon with comical confusion.*] O, here is black.

Who would have thought it? You belong to me.
Come, take your love-knot.

[He kneels with feigned disgust as she approaches him and fastens the black ribbon on his dress. Flourish of trumpets.]

Perin. *[Aside.]* Captivating witch!
She little knows my heart: I still must hide it.
[FLORETTA gives him his hat. He speaks aloud gruffly.]
What next?

Flo. I'm waiting for you.

Perin. O, come on!

[They go to DONNA DIANA, who gives them their masks. They then place themselves near DON LUIS and DON GASTON.]

Don C. [Rising and going to centre.] 'Twas fit that
they whose hearts are slaves to love,
Should choose before me. I select the colour
Of equanimity and freedom—*white*.

Donna D. That's strange. White is the absence of all
colour,
And, thinking none would take it, I reserved
White for myself; but you have foiled me, prince!
[Rising with dignity.] Here's white; you must content
yourself with me.

Don C. [Aside.] Now then, hold fast, my heart.

[DIANA approaches him; all rise; DON CÆSAR kneels to her; she fastens the white ribbon on his dress. Triple flourish of trumpets. She then gives him a mask, taking one herself. Subdued music is now heard; and at intervals, from inner room, through which guests are seen occasionally to pass and repass. All carry masks; the men have colours. DON CÆSAR, with visible emotion, leaves DIANA'S side as the other princes and her cousins approach her.]

Donna D. The couples now retire to the saloon.
The guests assemble, and the sport begins.
Let Love reign free, and Fortune favour all!

[DON GASTON and DON LUIS retire with their ladies]

to the inner saloon, preceded by the Master of the Ceremonies. PERIN and FLORETTA follow; then musicians; a louder strain of music from the inner saloon. DON CÆSAR and DONNA DIANA still stand at some distance from each other.

Donna D. [Aside.] Now, then, to test his strength!

[Aloud.] Your arm, Don Cæsar.

You fail in your attentions. Does it cost

So vast an effort to make love to me?

Remember, 'tis required by the occasion.

[DON CÆSAR, visibly suppressing his emotion, approaches her. She takes his arm.

A man of wit should better play his part.

[She turns from him.

Don C. O princess!

Donna D. What's the matter? *[She lays her right hand on his arm.]* Silent still?

Nay, this indifference offends me. What!

Can you not feign your part? Have you no talent,

Even as an actor?

Don C. Words are easy, lady,

When love is feigned. 'Tis the reality

That keeps me dumb.

Donna D. [In a very gentle tone.] What must I think of this?

You love me, then? *[She draws his hand to her.*

Don C. [With the utmost emotion, not daring to look up.] Why ask? What power but Love's

Could make me tremble thus?

Donna D. [With agreeable surprise, still retaining his hand.] Do you not jest?

Is this the truth?

Don C. Truth from my very soul.

Donna D. [Firmly, but with sympathy.] You said but now

You were incapable of love.

Don C. I spoke

Before this fatal shaft struck home.

Donna D. [*With a winning smile.*] What shaft?

Don C. The touch of thy fair hand, that thrills my heart
Even to its core. Princess!—Diana!—hear me!

Donna D. [*Aside.*] I triumph, then. [*Turning to him pleasantly.*] Prince, you deceive yourself.
Love you, indeed?

Don C. [*Loosing all self-control.*] You look on me, and
doubt!

How can words paint the longing that enchains
My senses, saps my peace, and threatens my reason.
'Twas your severity first roused my passion,
Yet strengthened me to hide it; but your sweetness
Has all subdued me. As when snows fall thick
Upon some mountain ridge, and there congealed,
Assume the shape of towers and battlements,
That glitter in the sun and look defiance,
Yet 'neath the breath of summer thaw to floods—
So melts the frozen mantle of my pride
Before thy smiles, and shows the bare, bare heart
Which owns thee, needs thee, seeks thy quickening life,
Or yields its own. Pronounce; I'm at thy feet!

[*He throws himself at her feet, and kisses her hand impetuously.*]

Donna D. [*Thrusting him off, and tearing herself away.*] Back, back, presumptuous man! What, art
thou he

Who could not feel love, nor endure it?
Who, safe thyself, must needs warn *me* of peril?
Peril from *thee*, who some day might submit
To marry for *convenience*! Hence! In me
Insulted Woman triumphs over Man!

Don C. [*Aside.*] Fond heart, thou hast betrayed me!
Calmness, calmness!

Donna D. [*Sternly and proudly.*] You had due warn-
ing, yet you dared to wage
This conflict with me; shallow fop, with *me*!

Don C. [*With feigned astonishment.*] Stay; does your
highness jest, or is this serious?

Donna D. I do not jest with you, poor love-sick dupe!

Don C. Dupe! love-sick! Then 'tis serious. What, you thought

I was in love in earnest? [*Rises.*] Ha! ha! ha!

[*He bursts into seemingly irrepressible and repeated laughter.*

O female vanity! So great a mind,
And yet so soon beguiled! In love! No, princess;
I cannot change so easily. In love!
Had it been possible, I'd rather died
Than owned such weakness. What! a few soft words,
A suppliant posture—common arts like these
Thus to delude you! Surely you forget
These duties were imposed by the occasion.

Donna D. [*Thoroughly confused.*] How now! What's this?

Don C. You bade me to dissemble,
And I obeyed.

Donna D. You but dissembled? [*Aside.*] No, Impossible.

Don C. Congratulate me, princess;
You said I had no talent as an actor.

Donna D. All, then, was feigned—the trembling voice,
the words,
The shaft that struck you home!

Don C. All feigned, believe me.
Surely your penetration should have guessed it.

Donna D. [*Absently.*] What say you? [*Aside.*] Not to see it! Was I blind?

[*Aloud.*] Well, prince?

Don C. [*Looking at her sharply.*] I scarcely understand your highness.

Donna D. [*Aside.*] I must compose myself! [*Rallying herself with a great effort, and addressing him gaily.*]

Your highness, I confess,
Played your part well. But, pardon me, I half
Suspected you were acting all the time.

Don C. [*With assumed frankness.*] I thought you did.

So, to encourage me,

You acted too. Your scorn was well put on,
So was your triumph ; look, tone, gesture perfect !
Talk not of *me* ; *your* acting was sublime.

Donna D. [*Aside.*] More mockery ! Patience ! [*Aloud.*]

No prince, you're the master,
And, as dissembling seems your gift, continue
The harmless folly ; feign to love me still.

[*Puts on her mask.*]

I own I like your wit and polished bearing,
And your pretence of passion charms me more
Than others' truth. [*Taking his arm, and playfully try-*
ing to lead him off.] Come, come, resume the attack.

Don C. Excuse me, princess.

Donna D.

Why, what risk is there

In this mere sport ?

Don C.

The greatest risk—the risk

That you may love me.

Donna D. [*With playful tenderness.*] And would that
misfortune

Be unsupportable ?

Don C. [*Sternly.*] I know of none

I so much dread. I think the danger serious.
Have you not praised my wit and bearing, owned
That my pretence of passion charms you more
Than others' earnest ? Are these sentiments
So far from love ?

Donna D. [*With a burst of rage.*] Yes, sir, as far
apart

As is your insolence from modesty ;
To guard myself from chance of further insult,
I give you leave of absence. [*Takes off her mask.*]

Don C. [*Aside, uneasily.*] She's at bay.

I've gone too far. [*Aloud.*] Still, are you not expected
To join the ball ? Your absence may offend.

Donna D. [*Still incensed.*] Mine is the fault, be mine
the blame. Withdraw.

Don C. [Concealing his embarrassment.] And am I then released from all my duties?

Donna D. When I pronounce you free, you are so. Leave me.

Don C. [After a pause, with suppressed anxiety.] Accept my thanks, then, for this gracious favour, For such I deem it. Heaven be with your highness.

[Goes out.]

Donna D. [Violently excited.] Do I dream? Can it be possible? Scorned, laughed at, Defeated by a man! No, not defeated. There must be some way to subdue him, else My sex is shamed in me!

Enter PERIN, hastily from inner room.

Perin. May it please your highness To join the masque? Your absence is remarked.

Donna D. [Sinking into a chair.] O Perin, I'm unwell.

Perin. [Sympathetically.] Unwell! Good heaven! *[Aside.]* Oh this is glorious! *[Aloud, looking round.]*

But where's Don Cæsar?
Gone for the doctor, is he?

Donna D. Silence, Perin.
I'm very ill.

Perin. Indeed! you look so, madam.

[Runs to table for a phial.]

Do try a little hartshorn. *[Offers phial.]*

Donna D. Hartshorn! Folly!
What good can hartshorn do?

Perin. I'm quite alarmed.
What is it ails your highness? Speak!

Donna D. [In a weak voice.] A tightness
About my heart. I suffer such oppression.

Perin. [Feigning great anxiety, and bustling.] Tightness
about your heart! Oppression! O!

Time's precious here. I'll to the doctor straight.

[Pretends to be going.]

Donna D. Stay; would you drive me mad? 'Tis outraged pride
Alone that moves me thus. Don Cæsar yet
Is unsubdued.

Perin. [*Aside.*] O, it works rarely. [*Aloud.*] Wondrous!
Are you still bent to humble him?

Donna D. I am,
I'd give my Principality to see him
In earnest at my feet, and bid him, then,
Despairing die there.

Perin. Very right he should.

Donna D. Listen to me. I'm told this man of flint
Has one weak point—he's sensible to music.

[*Perin claps his hands.*]

Now I shall need your help. 'Tis daylight still.
Hold him awhile in talk while I go forth
Into the private park where you shall bring him.

Perin. I understand.

Donna D. There will I take my lute.
I do not play amiss.

Perin. Amiss your highness!
To ravishment.

Donna D. Say he can hear me there
In secret—mind, in secret.

Perin. [*Affecting delight.*] Good!

Donna D. Because
None are allowed to break on my seclusion.

Perin. That will more tempt him.

Donna D. [*Who advances a few steps aside, Perin listening.*] Meantime, I'll put on
My choicest dress and give these slighted charms
All aids that fair attire supplies to beauty.

Perin. Well planned indeed!

Donna D. [*Smiling.*] You overheard me then?

Perin. A witching dress, some dress to make him
giddy
And take away his breath! And, then the lute!
His eye and ear assailed at once! He's done for.

Donna D. Enough ; I go. The dearest bliss I crave
Is to behold him in the dust—my slave ! *[Goes out.*

Perin. A rare device ! If I were not at hand
To warn him, the poor Prince were lost indeed.
O woman ! what a brain hast thou for mischief !
[Goes out.

SCENE II.

Grounds of Palace. A garden bench.

Enter FLORETTA and PERIN meeting.

Flo. So you are here, sir ! This is gallantry,
The very model of a knight are you
Who thus desert your lady.

Perin. Where's Don Cæsar ?

Flo. What's that to you or me ? Where are your
duties ?

I'm faint ; why don't you lead me to a seat ?

[Throws herself on garden bench.

I'm feverish ; why don't you ply my fan ?

[He fans her violently.

I am a woman and need compliments ;

Why don't you bend o'er me and praise my beauty.

Perin. I have no gift for lying.

Flo. Then acquire it.

Perin. What ! Would praise please you if you knew
it false ?

Flo. 'Twere better than no praise.

[Rising, and coming forward with him.

Perin. To be deceived ?

Flo. Pleasant deceit charms more than ugly truth.

Perin. *[Aside.]* I can't resist her frankness. Roguish
gipsy.

[Aloud.] Dear, dear Floretta !

Flo. Well ?

Perin. If you but knew
Your power o'er me, the witchery of those eyes—

Flo. Do you mean this?—

Perin. The honey of those lips?

Flo. How know you they are sweet?

Perin. They look so.

Flo. Looks

Are oft deceptive.

Perin. Taste is not; Floretta!

[About to kiss her, he checks himself and speaks aside.]

Stay; I'm too rash. The Princess *may not* love,
And should she not, my love might cost my place.

[Turns FLORETTA round and throws himself carelessly upon garden bench.]

Well; will that do?

Flo. What do?

Perin. Why the pretence
Of love you asked for. I have done my best?

Flo. Was all pretence then?

Perin. Surely. Come, Floretta,
Cast off this folly, emulate our mistress,
Pray for the time—the golden time—when love
And marriage both shall cease, when men and women
Shall dwell at different corners of the world,
And never meet again. Earth then will see
Its happiest generation!

Flo. *[Walking up to him significantly.]* And its last.
Forget not that. If men be all like you,
That generation cannot come too soon.

[Goes out indignantly.]

Perin. *[Laughing.]* Poor child, poor child! Well, I
must live in hope
To make her due amends. Now for Don Cæsar!

Enter DON CÆSAR.

Don C. Perin!

Perin. So prince, more news for you.

Don C. What news?

Perin. Be firm a little longer, and you triumph.

Don C. Friend,

You mock me. Never will that haughty spirit
Stoop to man's love !

Perin. Did you expect the fortress
To yield without a siege. Maintain it bravely,
And on my life she falls ; she must.

Don C. Why must ?

Perin. Because, instead of fighting under cover
She's rash and plans a sally. In plain words,
Equipped with all the dazzling aids of dress,
Her lute upon her arm, she seeks the garden,
And bids me bring you there in secret.

Don C. So !

Perin. That you may see her beauty in a garb
Would fire an anchorite, and hear her lute
That would enchant a stone.

Don C. Are you mad, Perin,
To drive me full into this siren's toils ?
She plays divinely ; I should ne'er resist
The spell of music.

Perin. Then don't listen to it.

[*Listens to distant sounds of music.*

O, she's already gingling.

Don C. Silence ! Silence !

[*A prelude of several instruments is heard from garden, then a lute only.*

Entrancing sounds ! 'Tis she !

Perin. Up, up, Don Cæsar !

The foe is in the field. Like your great namesake,
Go, see, and conquer. [*They walk a few paces : the lute
sounds again. DON CÆSAR stands absorbed.*] On,
prince ! on to victory !

[*PERIN drags him forcibly off.*

SCENE III.

Private park of the palace. A garden, planned in an arbitrary but ingenious style, and rich in contrasting objects. A group of trees on each side. To the left, statues and beds of flowers; to the right, a bower of roses with seats. Time, near sunset. Music is heard behind the scenes. Towards the end of the symphony enter FLORETTA. She looks around, then goes out at back.

Enter DONNA DIANA in an ideal and very exquisite dress, a coronet on her head. She carries a lute. DONNA LAURA and DONNA FENISA follow, with other instruments. Re-enter FLORETTA, meeting them.

Donna D. [To FLORETTA.] Have you observed Don Cæsar here?

Flo. No, madam.

Donna D. Watch. Should he enter, tell me instantly.

Flo. I will, your highness. [*Aside.*] There's some mystery here. [*Goes to back.*]

Donna D. [To LAURA.] Though he were granite, I would make him bend.

Donna L. That dress must take effect.

[DONNA LAURA and FENISA enter the bower.

Donna F. [*Aside.*] 'Tis very hard

That we should be detained thus from our partners.

Flo. [*Approaching hastily.*] Don Cæsar comes, your highness, also Perin.

Donna D. Sit quickly, cousins, and, as we arranged, Begin as he approaches.

Flo. [*Aside.*] I'm not curious ;
But I should dearly like to know their plot.

Enter DON CÆSAR and PERIN.

Perin. [To DON CÆSAR.] Be calm. Forewarned, fore-armed.

Don C. [*Gazing on DIANA.*] How can I see her,
Arrayed in all her splendour, and be calm?

Perin. [*Apart to him.*] Be firm, or you are lost.

[*DIANA'S music is begun with her cousins.*

Don. C. 'Tis vain to reason.

Though I foresee my doom, the lovely sorceress

Still draws me on. [*Advancing towards DIANA.*

Perin. [*Following him, and speaking apart to him in a low tone.*] You'll drive me frantic; stay,

You've heard enough. [*Seizing his arm.*] Look to your
helm, prince, quick,

Or you're within the rapids.

Don C. [*Recklessly.*] True! I know it.

Perin. Strain hard! [*Leading him off to a group of trees.*] That's well; we've just escaped the vortex.

[*PERIN continues to speak to DON CÆSAR eagerly aside.*

Donna D. [*Who has several times watched DON CÆSAR, and now speaks with a little irritation.*] Does
he not turn this way? You put me out;

I'll play alone. Observe if he looks round.

[*She plays a soft melody. PERIN leads DON CÆSAR nearer to her. DON CÆSAR appears to examine the garden attentively.*

Donna D. [*Aside to FLORETTA.*] Has he yet turned?

Flo. No more than yonder trees.

Donna F. [*To DIANA.*] He has taken root. You'll
have to dig him up.

Donna D. He can't have heard me, then. I'll make
him hear.

[*She betrays increasing impatience while playing, and at length strikes the chords violently. DON CÆSAR continues to look at the garden.*

Don C. [*In front, loudly to PERIN, his face turned from DIANA.*] Perin, this park is well laid out; the effect
Is bold and rich. Yon group of trees tells finely
In contrast with the lawn.

Donna D. [*Stopping the music.*] What do I hear?

Talks he of trees and lawns, while here I sit
And play the lute unnoticed? Has the man
No touch of feeling?

Don C. [*Loudly to PERIN.*] I'm especially
Delighted with the flower-beds. Those carnations
Are most superb.

Donna F. [*Aside.*] Carnations! He's a fool!
Praise silly flowers, and let us bloom unheeded!
[*To LAURA.*] Don Gaston is a different sort of man.

Donna L. So is Don Luis.

Donna D. [*Very much irritated.*] O, he can't have seen
me.

Floretta, go; tell him I'm in the garden.

Flo. [*To DON CÆSAR, who still appears lost in contemplation of the flowers.*] Are you aware, Don Cæsar,
that the princess

Is in the garden?

Don C. [*Without altering his position.*] The garden,
child, is lovely;

Most lovely, I confess. That bed's unique.

'Tis exquisite!—one mass of living colour!

[FLORETTA stands astonished for a moment, then
returns to DIANA, but says nothing. DIANA,
who has heard DON CÆSAR'S reply, rises en-
raged, and seems on the point of leaving the
bower. DON CÆSAR, still looking at the garden,
approaches her, upon which DIANA turns back.]

Perin. [*Pleased, apart to DON CÆSAR.*] I trembled for
you.

Now I can breathe again. You're born to craze her.

Don C. [*Apart to him.*] You guess not what I suffer.

Ah! [*Approaching closely to DIANA.*]

Perin. [*Apart to him.*] Fall back.

What want you here?

Don C. One glimpse of her—but one!

Perin. I can't allow it. Pass her, but don't look.

[DON CÆSAR passes DIANA with emotion, but with-
out looking at her.]

Donna D. [*Beside herself, to LAURA.*] Pass me, and never deign a look ! 'Tis monstrous !

Donna L. It seems incredible.

Donna D. Go to him, Laura !

He'll answer you. Tell him that I have seen him.

[*LAURA approaches DON CÆSAR, who is admiring a statue.*

Donna D. I'm very faint. [*She takes her lute, and sits.*

Donna L. Don Cæsar ! [*He stands absorbed.*] Are you deaf ? [*He turns.*] Were you not told

The princess now is here, and has observed you !

Don. C. [*As if rousing himself from a reverie.*] How, beauteous Laura ? What ! the princess here,

Resenting my intrusion ? You knew, Perin,

Of her approach ? Why was I not informed ?

[*To LAURA.*] Pray you, excuse my trespass to her highness.

My error was unconscious ; but I pay

The penalty at once, and so withdraw.

[*He bows to LAURA, and turns as if to go. LAURA stands amazed. DONNA DIANA starts up passionately, and throws the lute upon the ground.*

Perin. [*Aside to DON CÆSAR.*] That was a master-stroke. [*DON CÆSAR is going.*

Donna D. [*Aside, advancing.*] O heaven ! he's going !

[*Calling aloud, angrily.*] Don Cæsar ! Prince ! Remain !

Perin. [*Laughing apart to DON CÆSAR.*] She must come to,

Twist how she will.

Donna D. Draw near.

Don C. [*Who has stopped, now advances a few steps.*]

Was it to me

Your highness spoke ?

Donna D. [*Trembling with rage.*] To you, prince !—yes, to you !

Don C. [*Approaching.*] What is your pleasure ?

Donna D. [*With some composure.*] Why have you presumed

To venture here? I deemed myself alone,
And free from witnesses.

Don C. [Pointing to Perin, with pretended embarrassment.] 'Twas Perin's fault.

He led me to this spot. If I had guessed
That you were present, I had bent my steps
Some other way. I humbly ask forgiveness.

Donna D. But, prince, you heard our music.

Don C. [Affecting to ruminate.] Music? No.

Donna D. [Excitedly.] O, that's impossible!

Donna F. [To LAURA.] Too bad! Too bad!

Don C. [Feigning perplexity, to DIANA.] Have I again
displeased you? Then I know not
How to avoid offending. Lest I fall
Into worse error, and provoke you more,
I choose the lesser evil—banishment.

[He bows respectfully, and goes out quickly.]

Perin. [Aside, delighted.] Bolder at every step! He'll
do, he'll do!

*[He pretends to be perplexed, and stands beside DONNA
DIANA with a sympathising look. She is perfectly
stunned.]*

Donna L. The monster! He's not human.

Donna F. No, he's metal,
And moves by springs.

Flo. He's even worse than Perin.

Donna D. [Roused from her stupor.] Is it all true?

Has this indignity

Indeed befallen me? Despised, avoided,
Humiliated! I, Diana, I!

[To her cousins and FLORETTA.] Why do you follow me
with curious eyes?

Fall back: I'd be alone.

Donna F. [Apart to LAURA, as they retire.] Is she in
love?

*[FENISA, LAURA, and FLORETTA go out, with arch
looks and gestures.]*

Donna D. [To PERIN, who is also about to go.] Perin, approach !

Speak ! Did you bring him here as I desired ?

Perin. I did ; with much ado.

Donna D. He must have heard me

Play on the lute. What said he ? [PERIN remains silent as if embarrassed.] Well ?

Perin. [Affecting to hesitate.] Your highness——

He said——. You mean Don Cæsar ?

Donna D. Yes, Don Cæsar.

What did he say ?

Perin. He said—— he said. I beg

Your highness to excuse me.

Donna D. [Much irritated.] I will know.

Perin. He fancied that—— I really can't repeat it.

Donna D. Speak, I insist.

Perin. [Retreating.] He asked me then what children Were they who gingled thus upon the lute ?

Donna D. Gingled ! Not gingled ?

Perin. Gingled was the word,

And then he stopped his ears thus to shut out

The frightful discord, as he called it.

Donna D. [Almost weeping.] Slanderer !

I cannot bear this. Wretch ! Barbarian !

[Walks excitedly to and fro.

Perin. [Following her.] Ay, and a fool to boot. A shallow, brainless,

Dull, pert, conceited——

Donna D. [Stopping short.] Silence, Perin !

How dare you rate him thus—a gentleman

Of noble parts, accomplished, brave—— Go to !

Perin. A thousand pardons, but I never dreamed Abuse of him could wound you.

Donna D. Wound me, sirrah !

What means that word—that look of pity ? Think you

I am already fall'n ? No ; once engaged,

I'll never quit this conflict. He shall feel

I am Diana yet—scorned, not subdued,
I'll crush his pride, or in the effort die ! [Goes out.

Perin. [Repeating her words in a tone of tragic burlesque.] I'll crush his pride, or in the effort die !

Well, it's my firm opinion you'll do neither.

[He rubs his hands, and runs round the stage in elation. LAURA, FENISA, and FLORETTA re-enter, and crying,—“PERIN, is she in love?” “Do tell us, PERIN!” “Is she in love?” &c. At length they surround and intercept him, still repeating their questions.

Perin. [Extending his hands, with an air of great mystery.] Hush !

ACT III.

A Hall, with portraits and escutcheons. Wide centre doors open. Grounds by moonlight seen without. DON GASTON is discovered seated in an arm chair.

Enter DON LUIS.

Don L. You, Gaston ! Well, how goes it ?

Don G. [Drowsily.] How goes what ?

Don L. Why, life of course.

Don G. To speak the truth, but slowly.

In fact, I'm bored.

Don L. That's just my case.

Don G. Diana

Keeps not her pledge to join the festival,
But proudly holds aloof.

Don L. She might, and welcome,

Did she not also rob us of her cousins,
Our partners by lot.

Don G. Might I for life wear arch Fenisa's colours,
I'd leave to you, Diana.

Don L. You may take

The pair of them, if gentle Laura's eyes

Consent to smile on me. Princess Diana
Is too sublime, too unapproachable,
For my poor taste. In fact, the lady's rude.

Don G. [Looking off.] Here comes Don Cæsar, the
December moon.

Solemn and slow he moves—just like a chess-king,
Square after square. [*To DON CÆSAR, who enters, fol-
lowed by PERIN.*] Well, knight of the white favour !
[*Pointing to his white colours.*

Is it a snowball, emblem of your heart ?

Don C. You envy me my coldness, friends. No wonder.
You burn with love, yet kindle not a spark.

Don L. We bear our fate. Diana's cousins, sir,
Are fair as she.

Don G. As fair, and far more kind

Don C. [With a light laugh.] Then you propose de-
serting to the cousins.

To me the man who sees in any woman
More than a puppet, does himself become one.

[*PERIN makes signs of approval.*

Don G. [Aside.] Extremes meet. This wiseacre's half
a fool.

Don L. [At door.] There they go, Gaston ! Did you
see ?

Don G. The cousins ?

Don L. Yes, both. I have a song for the guitar
Meant for my Laura's ear.

Don G. And I a lay
In my Fenisa's praise, to which the drum
And trumpet shall bear accompaniment. Let's follow.

[*DON GASTON and DON LUIS go out.*

Don C. [Aside.] How hard is fortune. Changeable
hearts like these

Secure their prize. I, constant, lose my own.

Perin. [Approaching him.] Moody again, prince, and
your wild bird snared !

Don C. She is indeed a wild bird.

Perin.

True, she sits

And broods on that sweet egg she calls revenge ;
 But I'm mistaken, if love creep not forth,
 When the time comes for hatching. Still keep firm ;
 She yet has one resource—one stratagem—
 For which prepare yourself.

Don C.

What's that ?

Perin.

She'll try

To make you jealous. Mind whate'er she feigns
 You credit not a jot.

Don C.

I'm on my guard,

Perin. 'Tis her last chance ; but see she comes !

[*Both look off towards DIANA.*]

Don C.

The princess !

[*Enchanted.*] How airy is each movement. Like a
 goddess

She rather floats than steps.

Perin.

Again these raptures !

They're dangerous. Retire 'till you subdue them.

No—no—I say ; you sha'n't give battle yet.

[*DON CÆSAR goes out slowly, with an apparent desire of approaching DIANA. PERIN impatiently urges him off on the opposite side. PERIN then withdraws to back, and assumes a serious look. Enter DONNA DIANA, in deep thought. She stops in the centre, without looking round. PERIN watches her. A short pause, after which the following refrain of a song is heard.*]

[*Refrain sung to guitar off stage. " Laura ! Laura !
 Charming Laura ! "*]

Donna D. [*Gravely to PERIN.*] What means this absurd
 ditty, " Laura ! Laura ! "

Nothing but " Laura ! " What insipid folly ?

Perin. But still it spreads. The men are wild with love,
 And (you've observed it, madam) love's poor dupes
 Take instantly to music. Sing they must ;
 And, as you will not let them sing—Diana,
 They choose some meaner name. 'Tis sad, but natural.

Donna D. Again !

[*Song heard off stage, with martial accompaniments.*]

SONG.

*Let Fenisa's praises sound,
Let Fenisa's brows be crowned ;
Bring of flowers the freshest, rarest,
For of beauties she's the fairest.*

Donna D. [*Scornfully, and vexed to be neglected.*] How grand ! How overpowering ! Is it not ?

Perin. Yet folly has its use. A world all wisdom Might become tiresome.

Donna D. [*Thoughtfully.*] Perhaps you're right, And, had Don Cæsar mingled in this trifling, I scarce had blamed him. Not that I desire it. Thank heaven ! I'm not assailed with songs from him.

Perin. [*Aside.*] Joy, joy ! the bird is caught. [*Aloud.*]

As for Don Cæsar,
Remember you released him from his duties.

Donna D. I bade him go.

Perin. And so he went, of course.

Donna D. Why say "of course ?" Had he possessed one spark
Of spirit he had stayed.

Perin. And disobeyed you ?

Donna D. There are some virtues higher than obedience.

Perin. [*Aside.*] O, my rare system !

Donna D. Had he pressed his right
To attend on me, perhaps I should have yielded.

Perin. "Perhaps !" ay, there's the point. This grave cold prince
Takes words in their strict sense. If you say, go,
He deems not you mean stay ; or that your will not
Implies, perhaps you will. He sadly lacks
Perception, and the art of reading women.

[*Aside, observing DIANA'S absent and melancholy look.*]

Oh, my gold tincture ! my *elixir vita* !
[*Aloud.*] But see, the princes with their ladies come ;
All look absurdly happy.

Donna D. [*Looking off.*] And Don Cæsar
Comes with them.

Perin. But their childish ecstasies
Are lost on him, your highness ; be it ours
With calm superior eyes to note afar
The lot of frail humanity. [*They withdraw to back.*]

*Enter DON LUIS, DON GASTON, DONNA LAURA, and
DONNA FENISA, followed by DON CÆSAR.*

Don L. [*Apart to DON GASTON and DON CÆSAR.*]
She's watching.

Now then for the attack.

Don G. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR.*] Mark how I'll tease
her.

Don C. Even as you will ; I grudge you not the sport.

Don L. [*Aloud to LAURA.*] Fortune has smiled on me
to-day ; would Laura

Smile too, I'd ask no further boon of fortune.

Donna L. The custom of the mask makes you gallant.

[*They retire a few steps. DON LUIS continues to
speak urgently to her, every now and then look-
ing towards DIANA.*]

Don G. [*Aloud to FENISA.*] Do not think
The usage of this night extorts my homage :
Your loveliness compels it.

Donna F. I would fain
Believe you ; but you flatter. These love-fires
Shoot up too suddenly.

Don G. Be you less lovely,
And I shall be less ardent.

[*He kisses her hand, then converses apart with her
eagerly, watching DIANA from time to time.*]

Donna D. [*Aside to PERIN.*] They've no words,
It seems, to waste on me.

Perin. [*Apart to her.*] I could forgive
All but Don Cæsar. Look now how he stands,—
Embodied apathy ! O, I could box
His ears with pleasure. [*Turns aside to hide his laughter.*

Don L. [*To LAURA, FENISA, and DON GASTON.*]

What say you—shall we once more to the ball ?

Don G. Agreed ; let us enjoy even to the last,
These love-winged hours.

[DON GASTON and DON LUIS lead their ladies off
with eager gallantry, and pass DONNA DIANA
without looking at her. DON CÆSAR still stands
in abstraction.]

Donna D. [*Annoyed, and with affected scorn to PERIN.*]

They're swimming in a very sea of bliss !

Perin. Young blood, young blood ! They're not philo-
sophers

Like you and me, your highness.

[DON CÆSAR, as if awaking from his reverie, turns
quickly to follow the others. He pretends to see
DIANA for the first time, bows respectfully, and
continues his exit.]

Donna D. [*Aside.*]

What, Don Cæsar

Goes too ! he sees me and he goes ! I'll try

My last and keenest weapon—jealousy.

[*Aloud.*] Call him back, Perin.

Perin.

Prince ! prince !

Don C. [*Gravely.*]

Did you call ?

Perin. I did, my lord.

Don C.

Some other time. At present

I'm in the train of love.

Donna D. [*Quickly.*] Of love ? You love ?

Don C.

My freedom.

Donna D. You mean, then, that you do not love at all.
Freedom's a mere ideal ; but love needs
An outward object.

Don C.

Princess, pardon me,

As you ne'er loved, you can't tell what love needs.

VOL. II.

D

I really can't permit you an opinion
Upon that point. [PERIN *rubs his hands with delight.*

Donna D. [*Significantly.*] I may be more entitled
To give one than you think.

Don C. [*With an involuntary start.*] You love,
then?

Donna D. [*Aside.*] Ha?

He started! [*Aloud.*] It were rash to say I love;
But I confess my former views of love
Are somewhat shaken.

Perin. [*Aside.*] Somewhat.

Don C. [*With forced composure.*] Will you deign
To tell me why?

Donna D. [*Assuming earnest frankness.*] Yes, prince,
'tis only just,

As you have shared those views. Then thus I feel:
'Twere selfish to oppose my private will
Against a nation's hopes, a father's prayers.
To these I therefore yield; and, though my heart
As yet is free, since I must take a husband,
I've cast my eyes upon your cousin Luis,
Prince of Béarne.

Perin. [*Aside to DONNA DIANA.*] That hit was fatal.

[*Aside to DON CÆSAR.*] Nonsense!

Springs and bird-lime! [DON CÆSAR *looks oppressed.*

Donna D. 'Tis my resolution

Therefore to choose him. Could I choose more fitly?

[*A pause.*] Speak! love deludes not you. What's your
opinion?

You do not answer. Is my choice unwise?

[*Aside, exultingly.*] He's pale and speechless. Yes, at
last, at last!

[*Perin. [Apart to DON CÆSAR.] Shame, prince; is
this your firmness?*

Donna D. Why, Don Cæsar,

You seem astonished.

Don C. [*Recovering himself.*] Seem? I am astonished.

Donna D. At what?

Don C. [*Now quite self-possessed.*] That there should
be two beings so alike

As you and I ; not only do we think
And feel as one, but it appears our thoughts
And feelings change together. We are twins,
If not by birth, by nature. Tell me, princess,
How long is it since you took this resolution.

[Donna D. [Rather confused.] Only to-night.

Don C. [Eagerly] The hour ?

Donna D. [Surprised.] The hour !

[PERIN, also surprised, listens eagerly.

Don C. Was it not

Upon the stroke of nine ? For then precisely,
I took the very self-same resolution,
And for the self-same cause. [*Looking at her insinuat-
ingly.*] To gratify

My father and the state I choose a bride.

Donna D. [Aside, pleased and softened.] He means
myself. Why else the agitation

He lately showed ? I feel a strange relenting.

[Aloud.] Prince, as I freely gave my confidence,

I look for yours. Who is the happy fair ?

Don C. [Almost tenderly.] I fear to tell ; but thus far
I may venture :

She's of near kin to Barcelona's duke.

Donna D. [Aside, delighted.] That's to my father !

[Aloud.] Smiles she on your suit ?

Don C. She might, would you befriend it.

[PERIN makes a gesture of annoyance.

Donna D. [Aside, with suppressed exultation.] Just so.

[Aloud.] Really ?

Who can it be ?

Don C. You have not far to seek.

Donna D. [Very graciously.] Speak boldly, prince ;
her name ?

Don C. Her name is LAURA !

Donna D. [Confused.] What ! who ?

Don C. Your highness' cousin, Donna Laura.

Perin. [*Aside.*] Jove, what a move! It takes away one's breath. [*DONNA DIANA is struck dumb.*]

Don C. I feared Don Luis had secured my prize;
But, princess, you by choosing him, have rid me
Of this great danger. Thanks, a thousand thanks!
Well, is my choice approved? [*A pause.*] You do not answer.

What ails your highness?

Donna D. Ails me! Ails me! Nothing.

Don C. [*Pretending anxiety.*] You're pale! you tremble; something's wrong.

Donna D. Once more
I tell you nothing;—nothing but amazement
That you should see a goddess in a woman
So commonplace, so tame, so plain—— [*Checks herself.*]

Don C. As Laura!

Donna D. [*Aside.*] O what a wretch am I thus to miscall
My gentle cousin! [*Aloud.*] Prince, you've shown discernment.

Laura has every virtue.

Don C. So I think.
She's modest, sweet, accomplished, winning, graceful——

Donna D. [*Interrupting.*] But very commonplace.

Don C. O, there I differ——

Donna D. [*Impatiently breaking off the talk.*] 'Tis like
you may be right. 'Tis an affair
Of taste: you follow yours; I mine.

[*She turns away to hide her agitation.*]

Don C. [*Anxiously aside to PERIN.*] That sounds
Decisive.

Perin. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR.*] To it again.
The fort is silenced.

Don C. Princess, with your leave,
I now withdraw. [*Bows as if to go.*]

Donna D. [*Turning hastily.*] To your sweet Laura?

Don C. Yes.

[*Looking to back, and feigning rapture as Laura
passes out of doors.*]

See where she passes, O enchanting vision !
 Where all contrasting graces harmonise,
 Meekness with dignity, simplicity
 With nice refinement, delicate reserve
 With ardent feeling——

Donna D. [Interrupting and speaking ironically.] O,
 go on ! Go on !

You have not done. This is the prelude only,
 The first faint note of praise before the chorus,
 The spark before the fire, the dawn ere day !
 What is there so bewitching in your idol ?
 What amiable ? What endurable ?

Don C. In Laura, do you ask ?

Donna D. [Aside.] 'Tis base in me
 To wrong her thus. [*Calming herself by a strong effort.*
Prince, Laura is my friend—dear as a sister.
 Though your gross adulation roused my anger,
 I here retract each syllable I spoke
 In her dispraise. She's fair, and good as fair.
 Her heart is noble, and her face a mirror
 That shows her heart. You're right : go—go to Laura.

Don C. I fly : her sanction gained, I'll then entreat
 Your father's to confirm it. Finally,
 To crown this night's rejoicing, I'll tell Luis
 What happiness your highness destines for him.

[*He bows gravely and goes out.* DONNA DIANA stands
 motionless.

Perin. [Aside, looking after DON CÆSAR.] Played to
 perfection !

Donna D. The abyss of shame
 Is fathomed. He can love, but loves another.

[*She sinks into a chair. PERIN approaches DIANA
 gravely and with pretended sympathy.*

Donna D. [Aside.] The thought is torture ! [PERIN
 sighs deeply. *Feebly.*] Perin !

Perin. [Sympathisingly.] Yes, your highness.

Donna D. [Without looking up.] Comes he not back.

Perin. Back ! After offering

So gross an insult to you !

Donna D. Perin, peace !

I'm not myself ; I'm wretched !

Perin. Noble lady,

Be calm. Did any see you thus but Perin,

He might almost conclude your highness felt——

[*Hesitates.*

Donna D. Felt what !

Perin. If I must speak, the pangs of love.

Donna D. [*Trembling.*] The pangs of love !

Perin. Be calm, I beg. Of course

It can't be love you feel ; but, then, what is it ?

Donna D. I know not. All's distraction. Now I melt
In grief, now burn with hatred. I hate Laura ;
I hate Don Cæsar. Most of all I hate
Myself for hating them.

Perin. Worse than I thought !

This is not love alone : 'tis jealousy !

Donna D. [*Starting up enraged.*] Jealousy, minion !

To my face ! I jealous ?

Perin. [*Soothingly.*] Your highness !

Donna D. [*With passionate excitement.*] Quit my pre-
sence. Not a word.

You tamper with your life.

[*PERIN withdraws to back in pretended alarm.*

*DIANA, who has lost all self-control, stands still
for a moment, then covers her face with her
hands and hurries off the stage.*

Perin. [*Advancing.*] Poor flutterer !

Vain are thy struggles ; thou art in the net.

[*Looking off.*] Here comes Don Luis. He must draw the
strings. [*He draws back.*

*Enter DON LUIS with DONNA LAURA on his arm :
DON GASTON with FENISA.*

Don G. [*Advancing with FENISA.*] The masque is over
then ; I drop my visor.

[*Takes off his mask. FENISA takes off hers.*

Don G. But, though I drop love's emblem, love itself
Endures unchanged. I swear I love but thee.
Be mine !

Donna F. [*Aside.*] Not yet. [*Coyly.*] We'll speak of
this to-morrow. [*Retreating.*]

Don G. To-morrow
Would seem to me eternity ; to-night.

[*He follows her and converses with her at back, pressing his suit eagerly. DON LUIS and LAURA advance to front.*]

Donna L. [*Playfully.*] No vows, no vows : when lovers
simply say,
I doubt them ; when they swear, I disbelieve them.

Don L. [*Hurt.*] Must I then think you, like your
haughty cousin,
Incapable of love ? If so, farewell.

Donna L. [*Softly.*] Don Luis.

Don L. Donna Laura.

Donna L. Is this true ?

Don L. [*Approaching her eagerly.*] What ?

Donna L. [*With great naïvete and feeling.*] That you
love me ?

Don L. Need you ask ? Tormentor !

Donna L. [*Tenderly.*] Nay, if I grieved you, pardon
me ; for Luis,

I truly love you.

Don L. [*At her feet.*] Dearest life ! My own !

Perin. [*Advancing quickly and clapping his hands.*]

Bravo prince, bravo ! But the jest's now over,
And love begins in earnest.

Don L. [*Rising.*] How ! What mean you ?

Perin. Matters of weight. [*Calling to DONNA FENISA
and DON GASTON.*] Fair mistress, brave Don Gaston !

Don G. [*Advancing with FENISA.*] Well ?

Perin. I've news

Concerns you all.

Don G. Quick with it then.

Perin. Such news !

Don L. [*Impatiently.*] Go on.

Perin. The princess has at last
Discerned her error, and resolves to marry.

Don G. What's that to me?

Perin. What's that to you, Don Gaston !
I'm thunderstruck.

Don G. Good heaven, you cannot mean
That she has chosen me. Dissuade her, Perin ;
Kind, worthy Perin.

Donna F. Tell her that Don Luis
Would suit her better.

Don L. Pray you let Don Luis
Speak for himself. Since Gaston is her choice——

Perin. [*Interrupting.*] I said not that.
Don Gaston's fears are groundless. 'Tis yourself
The princess deigns to honour.

Don L. Me ! You're mad.

Perin. [*Gravely.*] And Donna Laura will be blest forth-
with
With brave Don Cæsar's hand.

Donna L. There go two words,
Friend, to that bargain.

Don L. This is no time for jesting.

Perin. For jesting ! I'm amazed. Do these good tidings
Fall on ungrateful ears ? No matter. Prince,
You have avowed yourself the lady's suitor,
And, if she wills to take you, must submit.

Donna F. Yes, there's no help for it.

Don G. You must indeed.

Don L. I must !

Perin. Decidedly. O chivalry, O knighthood !

Don L. [*After observing Perin closely.*] I fancy still
you're not in earnest, Perin.
Confess now there's some trick.

Perin. [*Laughing.*] You've sharp wits, Prince.
Well then, there is a trick. She has named you,
But to provoke another.

Don L. Ah, Don Cæsar ?

Donna L. She loves him?

Perin. Well, you're near the mark. And he
Has only named you to provoke the princess.

Don L. Then we are used
Simply for their convenience.

Perin. So it seems.

Donna L. This is too bad.

Perin. I grant it.

Don G. It is cool.

Donna F. Very.

Don L. A marked indignity! [*Resentfully.*]

Perin. [*Confidentially to Luis, but heard by all.*] Take
my advice,
And you shall have revenge—[*Significantly*—]—and some-
thing more.

Don. L. What more?

Perin. No less than Donna Laura's hand.

Don. L. You mean not that.

Perin. I'll stake my head upon it.
If you and your fair Donna act your parts
As I direct you.

Donna L. Act our parts!

Donna F. Don't question;
Confide in Perin.

Don G. [*To Fenisa.*] 'Twill be sport for us.

Perin. [*To Don Luis.*] Come then; my plan I'll tell
you as we walk.

Don L. Where would you lead us?

Perin. To the princess first.

Don. L. Where next?

Perin. [*Pretending to ruminare.*] Where next, Prince?
To the altar.

Don G. [*Applauding.*] Excellent, excellent!

Donna F. 'Tis quite a play. [*All go out.*]

Enter, at opposite side, DONNA DIANA, in deep reflection.
She walks slowly and unsteadily, then stops.

Donna D. Disguise is vain. This subtile fire that darts

Through all my veins is love ; wild, hopeless love !
 O retribution, terrible but just,
 The heart I would have tortured, 'scapes, while mine
 Consumes with agony ! *[She stands motionless.]*

PERIN *appears at back with DON LUIS, and speaks to him earnestly, pointing to DIANA.*

Don L. *[Advancing quickly and resolutely.]* Forgive me, generous princess. Joy like mine
 Stands not on ceremony. For this dear grace
 I thank you on my knees. *[Kneels.]*

Donna D. *[Amazed.]* What grace, Don Luis?

Don L. That which Don Cæsar, with your highness' sanction,

Has borne to me—the grace that gives me right
 To this fair, priceless hand.

Donna D. Either Don Cæsar
 Has lost his wits, or you have.

Don L. *[Rising.]* Must I think
 He has deceived me? oh, he dared not trifle
 With love like mine. I know your highness' truth.
 I put it to you then ; had not Don Cæsar
 Your warrant for his words? *[Perin applauds apart.]*

Donna D. Some idle phrase
 Perhaps escaped me.

Don. L. *[Archly, and smiling confidently.]* Which he
 took for earnest.

Princess, be frank. Did you not tell Don Cæsar
 Your choice had fallen on me? *[A pause.]* Enough, you're
 silent ;

The precious words were true. I have but erred
 In pressing you too rudely. In your promise
 And in the honour of a royal lady
 I trust, and so betake me to your father.

[He bows and goes out, followed by PERIN, who nods to him approvingly.]

Donna D. What did he say? Have I, rash fool,
 engaged

My honour to him? Must I wed this man? !
While I see Laura—ah, there's one hope yet !
She may not love. I'll tell her all ; my anguish
Will surely move her pity ! Pity ! No.

Enter DONNA LAURA, followed by FLORETTA.

Donna L. Retire, Floretta.

[*FLORETTA withdraws to back.*

Donna D. [*Aside.*] She herself ! [*Proudly.*] Diana
Think who thou art.

Donna L. Dear cousin, I am come
To ask your counsel. Sudden is the chance
That brings me hither. To be brief, Don Cæsar
Has offered me his hand. In all I yield
To the good pleasure of the duke, my uncle,
But ere I seek his sanction, would have yours.

Donna D. [*Aside.*] Can I endure this ? [*A short pause.*

Donna L. Have you heard me, cousin ?

Donna D. I have, I have. Mark, girl, how cruel
Fortune

Sports with poor mortals—to the thirsty wretch
Denies one cooling drop, yet opes a fountain
For him whose cup brims over. So with us.
Don Cæsar's pride—you know it—kindled mine ;
Yet he is at *your* feet. [*Becoming more and more excited.*
Think not I'm jealous. Girl, he has despised me,
And mocked me past endurance. Gentle cousin,
Pour on him the contempt that I have borne ;
Join all extremes to punish him. Be ice
When he implores ; when you resist be fire.
Be like the magnet, that with double force
Draws and repels. Be the seductive stream,
Bright, smooth, and swift, that hurries to the whirlpool,
But fatal as its eddy. Let him feel
What I have felt, until he writhes as I writhe !

[*PERIN appears at back.*

Donna L. What counsel's this ? Must I enact the crime

You blame in him? No; if he truly love me,
I shall return his love.

Donna D. You dare not! Think you
I'd suffer it. Though spurned, I still adore him.

[After a pause, and with great effort.]
Heed not my frantic words, I'm not myself.

*[She takes both LAURA'S hands, kisses her forehead,
and continues, with suppressed emotion.]*

I'm quite content. Be happy, dearest child.
Enjoy the bliss you well deserve—the bliss——

[Overpowered.]

That I—O heaven!

*[She bursts into tears and falls on LAURA'S neck.
FLORETTA approaches them.]*

Donna L. Floretta, I'm alarmed.
I've been too cruel.

Flo. [Apart to her.] No; the froward child
Deserves the rod. Remember how she plagued us.

Donna D. [Recovering.] Hence, away!
I love thee, Laura, but can't brook thy sight.

Donna L. What can I do? Even should I yield Don Cæsar,
Are you not bound in honour to Don Luis?

Donna D. [Aside, as if struck.] Bound to Don Luis?
[Aloud, with dignity and stern composure.] Go. Forget what's past.

You've seen the last fond weakness of Diana.

Donna L. [Alarmed.] Pray heaven she take not Luis
after all.

*[She retires, followed by FLORETTA, and speaks to
PERIN at back. DONNA LAURA, FLORETTA,
and PERIN go out.]*

Donna D. [After a pause.] Bound to Don Luis! I'll
redeem my pledge.

Cæsar, if thou hast guessed my love, this hour
Shall show thee I subdued it. With unfaltering step
I'll walk to doom, a princess though a victim.

*[She retires to a chair at back, and sits apart, with an
air of lofty abstraction.]*

Enter DON CÆSAR and PERIN. They advance to front.

Don C. Can I believe you, Perin?

Perin. [*Observing Diana, and speaking apart to him in a low cautious tone.*] Hush; she's here.

Yes, prince, she loves you fondly, desperately;
She has confessed it.

Don C. Let me then——

Perin. Not yet.

A word might ruin all. The Duke himself
Is privy to our plot, and comes to crown it.

[*Flourish of trumpets announcing approach of the Duke.*]

Enter DON DIEGO, DON LUIS, DON GASTON, DONNA LAURA, DONNA FENISA, FLORETTA; enter also ladies and gentlemen of the Court at back.

Don D. [*To Don Luis and the rest, with a slight glance at DIANA.*] No tidings, princes, more than these
could bless

A father's ear. My people and myself
May well rejoice. Daughter, your choice is known;
But it befits this high solemnity
That you in form record it. Bid your bridegroom
Now lead you forth.

Donna D. [*With stern resolution.*] Don Luis.

Don L. [*Aside, confounded.*] How! The jest
Grows serious. She can't mean it.

Don C. [*Alarmed, apart to PERIN.*] What's this, Perin?

Donna L. [*Agitated, apart to PERIN.*] Perin!—

[*DON GASTON, DONNA FENISA, and FLORETTA also signify amazement.*]

Donna D. I wait, Don Luis.

Don L. [*Aside.*] Heavens! I'm lost.
[*Advances to DIANA.*]

Perin. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR and DONNA LAURA.*]
I tremble; but the game's not over.

Donna D. [*Advancing hand in hand with DON LUIS to DON DIEGO.*] Father,
Pronounce the form.

Don D. [*Surprised.*] Diana.

Perin. [*Apart to DON CÆSAR.*] Catch her eye, prince !
Quick, quick ! [*DON CÆSAR approaches DIANA.*]

Donna D. [*To DON DIEGO.*] Pronounce the form.

Don D. Repeat it,
As I proceed ; thus—*You, Diana, daughter*
Of Don Diego.

Donna D. [*With a low and constrained tone.*] *I, Diana,*
daughter
Of Don Diego.

Don D. *Duke of Barcelona.*
And heiress to the Duchy.

Donna D. *Duke of Barcelona.*
And heiress—

[*She catches DON CÆSAR'S eye and stops short.*]

Don D. [*Prompting her.*] *To the Duchy.* You forget.

Donna D. Ay. *To the Duchy.*

Don D. *Here espouse Don Luis.*

Don D. [*Looking fixedly at Don Luis.*] *Here—here—*
espouse—espouse— [*She stops short.*]

Don D. How now, you falter.

Donna D. [*Aside.*] My doom at hand, no rescue, no
escape ! [*Turning suddenly and observing DON*
LUIS.]

Look, look, his head is bowed ! He stands like marble.

Is this a bridegroom's aspect ? Hear me, Luis !

If, without love, you claim me, you commit

A wrong past pardon. If you would retract,

And choose some dearer mate, declare it—answer.

Don L. I'm bound to you by honour.

Donna D. Ay, by honour,
But not by love. You do not say by love. [*A pause.*]
You cannot say it. Then I dissolve the bond.

[*She quits his side.*]

Don L. Princess, it is your pleasure. I submit. [*Bows.*]

Don D. Don Luis, is this true? Your choice falls
elsewhere? *[A short pause.]*

Don C. Duke, if I err not, yes.

*[He advances to DONNA LAURA, leads her to DON
LUIS, and joins their hands.]*

Donna D. *[Starting.]* How? Laura!

Don D. *[Feigning surprise.]* Laura! *[To DON CÆSAR.]*
Prince, methought yourself

Were plighted to my niece.

Don C. Sir, in the masque

Just ended, I have worn your daughter's colours.

Don D. But the masque over, you are free.

Don C. Great duke,

I'm not impatient for my freedom.

Donna D. *[Who has listened attentively, starting.]* Ah!

Don D. How must I take you? Do you love my
daughter?

Don C. *[Gazing tenderly on DIANA.]* I dare not say
what might so much offend her.

Donna D. *[Advancing from the rest, and speaking
aside.]* Am I so blest?

Don D. *[To DON CÆSAR.]* Your trifle, prince. Speak
some one.

Donna D. *[Gravely, with downcast eyes.]* The task be
mine. Down stubborn heart! Subdued

And chastened to repentance, own thy sin,

Cast off thy vain disguise. If e'er I wed

I call him lord who vanquished pride by pride.

Don C. *[Approaching her eagerly.]* And who is he?

Donna D. *[With painful vehemence, and raising her
hand which he passionately seizes.]* Tyrant, why ask?

Thyself. *[She bursts into tears.]*

Don C. *[Embracing her.]* Tyrant! Ah, no.

I have but conquered, sweet, the privilege

To be your slave for ever.

Perin. *[Aside, drawing a long breath.]* Safe in port!

I thought we should have foundered.

Donna D. *[Apart to DON CÆSAR.]* And thou lov'st me?

Don C. Love thee? 'Twas love alone that gave me strength

To feign indifference. O the strife was fearful.

Perin. [*Aside, approaching them.*] Yes, I'll be sworn, it was.

Don C. [*Shaking PERIN'S hand.*] Hail prince of schemers !

[*To DONNA DIANA.*] 'Twas his shrewd brain that planned my whole attack.

Perin. Fie, prince ! Have you no conscience ? Would you charge

Your crafty doings on a simple, honest,
Straightforward soul like me ?

Donna D. [*Shaking her hand at PERIN, in playful menace.*] O traitor, traitor !

Don D. [*Gaily.*] We've all been traitors, daughter, more or less.

But now the game is done, and all that's real
Is your own happiness and Cæsar's love.

Donna D. Others are happy with us. You, Don Luis,
Have won a prize in Laura ; you, Don Gaston——

Don G. [*Taking FENISA'S hand.*] Am the proud
satellite of this bright star.

Flo. Perin ! you see what all the rest have done.
Shall we be out of fashion ?

Perin. Child, don't plague me.

It needs consideration.

Donna D. [*Sportively.*] Perin, I'll not bear
To see her tortured.

Perin. [*Aside.*] You know what it means.

Donna D. Take her, and with her take five thousand
ducats.

Perin. Your highness, I must yield, if you command.
None else should force me. [*To FLORETTA.*] Come,
then, saucy jade. [*Kisses her heartily.*]

Donna F. [*To DIANA.*] It seems our fate, dear cousin,
to be slaves.

Donna D. The willing slave in all but name is free,
Contented vassalage is liberty ;
Weak are we, and must cling.

Don C. But gentle too,
And when most yielding, do the most subdue.

Donna D. Let man then rule the world ; 'tis nature's
plan.

Don C. While woman, by her sweetness, governs man.

END OF DONNA DIANA.

THE
FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE.

A Comedy,
IN FOUR ACTS.

The Favourite of Fortune.

*First represented at the THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, on
Easter Monday 1866.*

CHARACTERS.

FRANK ANNERLY, *who has lately come*

into a large fortune, Mr SOTHERN.

TOM SUTHERLAND, Mr BUCKSTONE.

MAJOR PRICE, Mr ROGERS.

MR FOX BROMLEY, Mr CHIPPENDALE.

MRS LORRINGTON, *a wealthy widow,* . Mrs CHIPPENDALE.

HESTER LORRINGTON, } *her* } Miss KATE SAVILLE.

LUCY LORRINGTON, } *daughters,* } Miss NELLY MOORE.

MRS WITHERBY, Mrs E. FITZWILLIAM.

EUPHEMIA WITHERBY, *her daughter,*

a nervous young lady, Miss CAROLINE HILL.

CAMILLA PRICE, *niece to the major,* . Miss H. LINDLEY.

Sailors, Sailors' Wives, Servants, &c. &c.

*Scene, Mrs Lorrington's marine villa and grounds in
the Isle of Wight.*

Time, 1866.

THE
FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*An apartment in MRS LORRINGTON'S marine villa in the Isle of Wight. The apartment communicates with a terrace through an open French window which affords a distant view of the sea. A pianoforte open.*

*Enter through window MRS WITHERBY and
MAJOR PRICE.*

Mrs With. Yes, we've now been Mrs Lorrington's guests for more than a week, major; do you ever feel a slight temptation to be dull, just a preliminary symptom of ennui?

Major. I should be unpardonable, did I suffer from such a complaint in the presence of such a remedy for it. *[Bows.*

Mrs With. Thanks, dear Major, but truce to your regency breeding, which is too good for this age; I want to ask you an odd question. Who is our eccentric hostess?

Major. I can only define her as the rich Mrs Lorrington.

Mrs With. Thank you, I knew that before; I mean what is her family, who are her connections? Though

I've known her, in a sense, for a twelvemonth, I can never get her to speak of them.

Major. Nor I ; all I know is, that a few years since she settled in Hampshire ; I was introduced to her by my old friend Sir Richard Sutherland, who had his own reasons for being civil to her ; I found out that she had a first-rate cook, and capital quarters for shooting and fishing : so I was civil too. When did you discover her ?

Mrs With. She discovered me last summer at Spa, forced an acquaintance, and overpowered me with attentions ; in time she grew convenient to me, as the wealthy vulgar sometimes are to people of family.

Major. And in return, she hopes to get into society under your wing.

Mrs With. Yes, though it baffles my wit to know how to pass her off with her fine English culled from novels of the last century, and her droll scraps of French perverted from phrase books.

Major. Not to mention her strange deviations into coarseness, when she becomes excited.

Mrs With. Yes ; it's hard to say whether her vulgarity is worse when she remembers herself, and is artificial, or when she forgets herself and is natural.

Major. You know she honours me, by consulting me on points of deportment ; and, as a mentor, I sometimes venture on a hint.

Mrs With. O ! I've observed it ; but now tell me about this strange news of hers ; she insists that young Sutherland, who arrived here last night with Mr Annerly, is to marry her daughter Lucy.

Major. Quite true ; Sir Richard Sutherland, being a good deal embarrassed, borrowed a large sum from her on mortgage of part of the Sutherland property ; that sum he finds it inconvenient to repay ; he consents that Tom Sutherland, his nephew and heir, shall marry her daughter Lucy, and she agrees to transfer the mortgage to Lucy on her wedding-day. Thus, you see, the property remains in the family.

Mrs With. O! the usual compact; rich obscurity aspires to position, and needy position stoops to wealth. Hush!

Enter MRS LORRINGTON.

Mrs Lor. Pray excuse my brief desertion of you; the *petits soins de ménage, vous savez*, will interfere.

[*Sits on ottoman between MAJOR and MRS WITHERBY.*

Mrs With. [*Restraining her laughter.*] Heavens! What a woman!—No apologies I beg.

Mrs Lor. O! you are so invariably kind; yet I sometimes fear lest you should weary of my little retreat, my *petit chez moi*, as I call it.

Mrs With. [*Aside, horrified.*] My *petit chez moi*!

Major. Weary, my dear madam; you have invited us to a paradise. Besides, I have always had a passion for the seaside, since the days when the Regent created Brighton.

Mrs Lor. O! but delightful Brighton must have been very different from my humble seclusion; there no doubt you mixed in the refined gaieties of an aristocratic circle, lived in the very atmosphere of wit and beauty.

Major. I cannot miss the former when I converse with Mrs Lorrington, nor the latter, when I look at her. [*Bows.*

Mrs With. [*Aside.*] How tedious this dear old imposter gets, with his worn-out courtliness. [*Aloud.*] I always find the country charming for a few weeks; but, I confess, town's the place for my taste. There I hope to introduce Mrs Lorrington to some charming acquaintances.

Mrs Lor. And since you are so obliging, I'll give no end of entertainments.

Mrs With. Leave that to me.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] She'll be putting me off with a kettle-drum tea. [*Aloud.*] No; it's not fair that you should incur expense on my account. Well, now, a bargain; you shall give the entertainment and I'll——

Major. [*Apart to MRS LORRINGTON.*] Hush! You musn't offer to pay for them.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] Why not? What can be the difficulty?

Mrs With. But now to other matters. The Major and I have been talking of your daughter Lucy, and young Sutherland. I suppose that Lucy likes the match.

Mrs Lor. Lucy knows that I think it eligible.

Mrs With. Mr Sutherland, at least, is eager for it.

Major. His uncle, Sir Richard, is; and as Tom is quite dependent upon him, it comes to the same thing.

Mrs With. Then some day Lucy will be Lady Sutherland.

Mrs Lor. [*Eagerly.*] Yes; and they say Sir Richard's a bad life, indeed, he may die any day, and whenever that happens——

Major. [*Apart to her.*] To your inexpressible regret——

Mrs Lor. To my inexpressible regret, Tom will be Sir Thomas.

Mrs With. He's just back from the continent, I find.

Mrs Lor. Yes; from a tour with his intimate friend Mr Annerly. On arriving at Southampton they took a week's run through this charming island, and last night, as you know, arrived here; of course I invited Mr Annerly as Tom's companion.

Mrs With. And he came! [*Aside, rising and coming forward.*] Young Annerly, one of the richest and best-connected men in Hampshire, a complete favourite of fortune! What cards this woman holds. Can she have any designs upon him for her daughter Hester? I too have a sweet fatherless child, though she is a shy, nervous simpleton, and the Major has a quick-eyed niece. [*Looking at timepiece.*] Surely, Major, the gentlemen and these giddy girls should now be back from their ride. You know we must be at Ventnor at three for Lady Dobson's *matinée*. It's high time for us womankind to dress.

Major. True; and as I have letters to write, I must perforce tear myself from the society of our hostess. [*Rises.*

Mrs Lor. [*Rising.*] My dear Major, I absolve you from all apologies.

Major. [*Aside.*] What a splendid woman ! She ought to have lived in the days of the Regent.

[*Bows and goes out.*]

Mrs With. And I must to my room. I can't tell you, my dear, how much vexed I am that Lady Dobson sent you no card.

Mrs Lor. [*Nettled.*] Don't be annoyed on my account, I beg.

Mrs With. It was a shame to pass you over ; I'd half a mind to write to her.

Mrs Lor. I'm delighted that you did not. I never thrust myself upon people.

Mrs With. Thrust yourself ! You dear, naughty, perverse creature. *Fi donc ! Fi donc !* [*Aside.*] What would she say if she knew that Lady Dobson had sent her a card through me, and that I never delivered it ?

[*She goes out.*]

Mrs Lor. No, thank heaven, I'm above being beholden to her. Lady Dobson ! I'll let her know that Lady Rockstone called on me last week, and got ten pounds out of me for the Sailors' almshouses ; and she said she would call again, and she curtsied to me at church, she did, and she a peer's wife. Lady Dobson indeed !

Enter by window LUCY and HESTER.

Lucy. Here we are again, mamma, you see.

Hes. Yes ; and we've done a good morning's work. We've collected twelve pounds for the families of the poor fishermen who were lost last week near Ventnor.

Lucy. And we've heard such a romance.

Mrs Lor. Romance !

Lucy. Touching a mysterious stranger to whom Hester has already lost her heart.

Hes. Nonsense, child ! [*To Mrs LORRINGTON.*] We have simply heard the story of a brave young man, who went thrice with the boatmen to the rescue of the drown-

ing. The last time, so high ran the sea, that the boatmen, faint with their efforts, feared to venture again, Once more the stranger seized his oar, cheered them on, and returned with fresh lives as the prize of his courage. Wasn't it noble !

Lucy. [*Playfully embracing her.*] Bless her ! dear little enthusiast !

Hes. This happened at midnight ; the unknown took off his overcoat, wrapped it round a lad who had been saved ; and then, content with having done good in secret, went his way, without a trace.

Lucy. [*Laughing.*] Isn't she in love ?

Mrs Lor. And nothing is known of him ?

Hes. Nothing, except that he was a gentleman.

Mrs Lor. His conduct has my unqualified approval. But now I must seriously reprehend your neglect of our guests. Why did you not take equestrian exercise with the rest ? You, Lucy, are more especially culpable, considering your position with Mr Sutherland.

Lucy. But I deny the position, mamma ; he is nothing to me.

Mrs Lor. Nothing to you, ungrateful girl ! Haven't I gained for you a reception into a family *très distinguée*, a prospect at Sir Richard's death—[*Remembering herself*]—which, of course, I should inexpressibly regret—a prospect of becoming Lady Sutherland ?

Lucy. Yes ; and in the meantime I should die of my husband. What would be the worth of the prospect then ?

Hes. Why, about the worth of a railway insurance ticket, which offers you a fortune on consideration that you're killed in the train.

Mrs Lor. [*Greatly excited.*] Very well, Lucy ; thwart me, then, thwart me ! Refuse to be a baronet's lady if you like ; laugh at your mother's anxiety, forget that you're my child ! But, mind, miss, that I don't forget it too ; I'll disown you.

Lucy. Because I don't fancy Tom Sutherland ?

Mrs Lor. Nonsense ! You didn't dislike him before he went abroad.

Lucy. No ; I wasn't consigned to him, then, like a bale of goods.

Mrs Lor. [*Coaxingly.*] Besides, you'll grow to like him in time. We women, you know, are like the ivy, and always twine round the nearest object.

Lucy. Like the ivy, indeed ! No, mamma ; like the hop, you should say, as so many of us twine round a stick.

Mrs Lor. Mind, Lucy ; I've given you warning.

Lucy. Well, perhaps Mr Sutherland won't propose for me.

Mrs Lor. That's his look out. If he doesn't, he's as big a fool as—— [*Lucy stops her by holding up her hand.*] There ! You've driven me to coarse language—me, who never use plain words, except I'm provoked—me, who, as a girl, framed myself upon the most select fictions of my time.

Lucy. But, mamma——

Mrs Lor. Be still ; you would provoke a saint. You're as bad, Hester. I shall never have you settled. There was Sir Peregrine O'Reilly, the remote descendant of an illustrious Irish prince, whom you rejected at Spa ; and here's your letter from poor—that is, rich—Mr Paul Gresham, whom you drove from Scarborough ; but who, this very morning, does you the honour to renew his proposals.

[*Giving letter.*

Hes. O ! you need not have returned it.

Mrs Lor. And now, there's Mr Annerly, who combines fortune with family ; but, instead of trying to make your way with him——

Hes. [*Indignantly.*] Make my way with him !

Lucy. A languid, fine gentleman, who scarcely deigns to open his mouth !

Hes. Nay, that's his one good point ; for, though we must endure his manners, we're mercifully spared his conversation.

Lucy. But did you hear him sing last night ?

Hes. Yes, by clockwork ; not a spark of expression.

Lucy. I'd rather hear him talk than sing.

Hes. Exactly ; one would rather a man murdered sense than feeling.

Mrs Lor. Desist, I entreat ; don't you see what court Mrs Witherby pays him ?

Hes. Yes, she has a daughter to marry. But you—you, darling—[*Softening to MRS LORRINGTON*—were never meant for a fashionable mother.

Mrs Lor. [*Indignantly.*] Hester !

Hes. No, you were not. [*Embracing her.*] Your heart's better than your words. So give up the notion of holding an auction in your drawing-room, and knocking down your daughters with your fan.

Lucy. Well said, my brave Hester !

[*Goes up to window.*]

Mrs Lor. [*Hurt.*] Not a fashionable mother ! Thank you, Hester.

Lucy. [*Looking from window.*] Good heaven ! Surely I know that man. Mamma, Hester ! Yes, it is !

Hes. Is what, Lucy ?

Lucy. Why, mamma's friend, Mr Fox Bromley.

Mrs Lor. [*Agitated.*] Bromley ! Stuff and nonsense, girl. Bromley ! Ridiculous. Why do you give me these starts ?

Hes. Starts, mamma ! Isn't he your particular friend ?

Mrs Lor. Hold your tongue ; come from that window.

Lucy. Well, mamma, judge for yourself. There's the man in question walking down the beach !

Mrs Lor. [*Going to window, and looking out.*] It's like him, but it can't be he.

Lucy. You'll see him plainly from the terrace.

Mrs Lor. I believe you've said this in spite to annoy me. [*Aside.*] My heart quite flutters. Should it indeed be Bromley !

[*Goes out by window, and passes down terrace.*]

Hes. Still this mystery ! At times she bids us look

upon Bromley as her best friend ; yet he never appears without making her wretched.

Tom. [*Without.*] Just walk my horse up and down ; he's hot.

Lucy. [*From window.*] O Hester ! Here's the equestrian group, as mamma would say, returned—my precious cavalier, Tom Sutherland, amongst them. Let's go, or he'll be here.

Hes. And my pet would really not marry him ?

Lucy. Marry on compulsion ! I'd as soon go to gaol.

Hes. And so would I, Lucy. For a bridegroom forced on one is after all but a gaoler—a refined turnkey in a white waistcoat.

Lucy. [*Throwing her arms round HESTER.*] Ah, I know whose heart is in the right place. But, seriously, my romantic darling, hav'n't you lost that little organ to the gallant stranger ?

Hes. Hush, Miss impertinent, or I'll box your ears. [*Listening, while TOM laughs without.*] O, here's Tom coming ! Away, away ! [*They go out laughing by door.*]

Enter TOM SUTHERLAND, by window.

Tom. Well, if there was ever a riddle on two legs, it's Frank Annerly. Pretending indifference to his species ; yet always doing somebody a good turn. As listless and *blasé* as an old courtier ; yet prompt as a boy to an act of generosity or daring. I really can't fathom him, and that's saying a good deal for a shrewd fellow like me.

Enter ANNERLY, by window.

O, here you are, Frank ! On my word, I can't say how much I feel your goodness to my worthy pedagogue. You'll positively make him the offer ?

Ann. Yes, Tom, with all the pleasure in life.

Tom. [*Warmly shaking hands with him.*] Thanks, thanks, my dear Annerly. You're a capital fellow, though you do your best to disguise it.

Ann. My dear boy, I can't hold the post myself. Who has a better right to it than your good old tutor?

Tom. O! the news will be life to him. Poor old Dominie Sampson! You know I always call him Dominie Sampson, because he is such a book-worm. How lucky for him that I took you to that little town in the Pyrenees, where the poor fellow's hope was fast smouldering out. I'll write to him at once.

Ann. [*Sinking listlessly into an arm-chair.*] Do so. It will be a pleasure, I know, to your kind heart.

Tom. Kind heart! Nonsense, Annerly, phrases of that sort make a fellow look confoundedly sentimental, and I am a thorough Englishman, and hate sentiment. My *forte* is practical sense and shrewdness.

Ann. Well; we shall see how your shrewdness will serve you with Lucy Lorrington. By the way, she seems as anxious to avoid you as you could wish.

Tom. Maiden coyness, I suppose. I confess to a slight liking for the girl before I went abroad; but she's now my aversion. Besides, I'm not to be driven into matrimony at thirty-five, and I would not marry a Venus upon compulsion. Of course, for his own interest, my revered uncle is awfully bent upon the match; and as he can cut off my supplies, I'm in a ticklish position. However, I shall go in for tactics.

Ann. Tactics be it then, if you think the matter worth them.

Tom. Confound your affectation, Annerly. I suppose you're in one of your "used up" moods, and find life insupportable.

Ann. Not insupportable!—only dull.

Tom. And what's worse than dulness?

Ann. The toothache, I fancy; though I never had it.

Tom. This is sheer feigning. With health, wealth, and position, have you an object unattained?

Ann. No; I wish I had.

Tom. Why?

Ann. For the zest of pursuing it. My pleasures are too

well preserved ; I don't follow my game ; I shoot from my chair, and it drops.

Tom. O, that's your complaint !

Ann. I don't complain ; I resign myself.

Tom. To what ? To being envied by all the men you meet, and flattered by all the women ?

Ann. And cared for by nobody except you, Tom.

Tom. Nonsense !

Ann. Flattered ! you say : its my twenty thousand a-year that are flattered. I'm but a—bank note, valuable for what I represent ; waste paper without it.

Tom. As you're so ungrateful for your fortune, it's a pity you ever came into it.

Ann. I never expected to do so. My cousin's brother, Captain Annerly, died about a year before him. Had he survived, he would of course have been heir-at-law.

Tom. A sad scapegrace, that Captain Annerly !

Ann. O yes ; he was quite estranged from his family. He went out to New Zealand with his regiment, and after a few years, fell in a skirmish with the rebels. We only heard of his death through the War Office.

Tom. And so you had the ill-luck to become rich. If poor, you might still believe in your fellow-creatures !

Ann. Not a bit the more.—Don't beat the devil's tattoo, old fellow, but listen. Cronies as we are, I'll tell you a secret. Once on a time, Sutherland, I was a fool ;—I know I shall surprise you.

Tom. No ; not particularly.

Ann. Not by the fact of my folly ; but the kind of it. To resume, once on a time I was—I was in love.

Tom. In love !

Ann. On my veracity ; though I can't account for it, any more than I can for the measles. The girl was a *blonde*, an airy, fairy, sylph-like creature, with the most exquisite little head bending from her pensile neck, like the cup of the lily from its stem ; a face with every delicate feature perfect, the finest miniature drawing of nature ; eyes the *chef d'œuvre* of the same artist ; a voice—I won't describe

that. If you had only heard her, you would have guessed her face from her voice ; and if you had only seen her, you would have guessed her voice from her face. Well, I was infatuated ; I declared my passion ; the sweet voice did not say no—nor did it say yes ; but it trembled ; the tones said, I love you ; the eyes, ditto ; the dear drooping head, ditto. I appealed to her parents ; they smiled ; they left all to dear Laura. I was in ecstasy. What need of words with such glances to feed on ? My bachelor cousin was at that time still living, but in such infirm health that no one expected his recovery. Failing children, I was his heir ; suddenly he rallied, and resolved to marry.

Tom. In which case, his fortune would have gone to his children.

Ann. Just so. I mentioned this one morning in the presence of my adored one. On calling the next day, Laura and her parents were from home ; the day after that, the same answer, though the carriage was at the door. The fourth day I found the father's "take leave" card on my hall-table. I saw Laura no more ; my castle in the air had tumbled down, and its lovely tenant left me in the ruins.

Tom. But your cousin never did marry ?

Ann. No ; his malady returned, and he succumbed to it. I got his fortune, and with it my experience.

Tom. Still, you can't condemn all women for the crime of one.

Ann. No ; though I take that one to be a tolerably fair type of the whole.

Tom. Frank, you are a calumnious and conceited puppy.

Ann. You shall judge. The ladies will soon reappear. Mark the part I shall play, and you will find that an impertinent fellow may be admired for his humour, a fool for his wit, a fop for his manliness, and a cynic for his good nature ; provided he be also a favourite of Fortune. Hush ! I hear the rustling of their muslins. Observe now.

Enter MRS WITHERBY *and* EUPHEMIA, MAJOR PRICE *and* CAMILLA, MRS LORRINGTON *and* HESTER ; *all but the two latter attired for a drive.*

Mrs Lor. I've ordered the equipage round. Pray be seated till it arrives.

Ann. [*Resuming the languid manner he had by degrees thrown off.*] Welcome, ladies. Fatigued by your ride, Miss Witherby?

Euph. [*Timidly.*] Yes. O no, no! I thought it delightful.

Mrs With. [*Aside.*] Shy simpleton!

Ann. [*To CAMILLA.*] Nor you, Miss—Miss—I beg your pardon.

Major. Price, my dear Annerly; my niece, Miss Price, you know. The Prices are Hampshire people, and always supported your family at election times.

Ann. Yes; my grandfather used to say that he seldom gained a vote without the aid of a good price.

[*All laugh but MAJOR.*]

Major. [*Aside.*] Awfully ill bred! How different from the Regent's time!

Mrs With. [*To ANNERLY.*] Now, what can make you so severe?

Ann. I can't say. Perhaps it's my ride.

Mrs With. Why, your ride?

Ann. Bore of having to admire the country; beauties of nature, you know, and all that nonsense.

Mrs With. But surely, Mr Annerly, you appreciate them?

Ann. O yes! But they work a fellow awfully hard. Don't you think so, Miss Price?

Cam. [*Significantly.*] They sometimes interrupt an agreeable conversation.

Ann. Then, one gets hot and dusty in climbing up those confounded chines. Eh, Miss Witherby?

Euph. O, but I don't mind the dust.

Mrs With. [*Prompting her.*] Not when you have a pleasant companion.

Euph. [*Timidly.*] Yes, that's what I meant.

Major. [*To ANNERLY.*] Now, while we're waiting, won't you sing us a ballad?

Cam. Yes, do; you sang so charmingly last night.

Ann. You flatter me. My tastes are all for the grand scientific style.

Cam. [*Eagerly.*] O, so are mine!

[*HESTER rises and goes to piano.*]

Mrs With. Indeed, Miss Price! I thought last night you preferred ballads to everything.

Cam. I fancied I did, when Mr Annerly sang them.

Mrs With. [*Laughing significantly.*] Ahem! ahem!

Mrs Lor. [*Imitating her.*] Ahem! ahem! [*All exchange glances;—languidly, and imitating ANNERLY.*] For my part, I and my daughter decidedly prefer both styles.

Ann. That's so amiable of you.

Hes. Don't speak for me, mamma. I own I like nothing better than a ballad; but then it must be sung with expression. [*At piano.*]

Ann. O, I don't go in for expression; one gets that sort of thing at the Opera.

Hes. [*Aside.*] Coxcomb! [*Aloud.*] And it's a fault from which your singing is perfectly exempt.

Ann. [*Surprised, apart to TOM.*] Tom!

Tom. Well?

Ann. That was a hit at me.

Mrs With. O, but you have expression too—in due moderation. [*Aside to EUPHEMIA.*] Speak, can't you.

Euph. [*Constrainedly.*] As much as is wanted for a room.

Mrs Lor. And is consistent with good taste. I'm sure you admit that, Hester?

Hes. Yes; it's always good taste to aim at nothing beyond one's capacity.

Ann. [*Apart.*] Tom!

Tom. [*Apart.*] She's quizzing you, old fellow. [*Aloud.*]

Well, as defects seem to be merits, and as it's a sign of taste to want expression, I suppose his singing would be perfect, if it were out of tune.

Ann. A new idea, positively. Do you assent to it, Miss Lorrington?

Hes. That depends upon my company. There are certainly times when society would be more agreeable if the listeners could be deaf, or the speakers silent.

Ann. [*Apart.*] By Jove! Tom, she meant that for me again.

Cam. [*Glancing at ANNERLY.*] But I am sure there are times, on the contrary, when one might be content to be dumb, if one retained the privilege of hearing.

Major. [*Aside.*] Clever girl! clever girl!

Mrs With. Effy, love, you're on my dress. [*Rises; apart to her sharply.*] You should have said that.

Major. It's past two, ladies; we shall be late for the *matinée*.

[TOM and MRS LORRINGTON rise and go into the conservatory.]

Mrs With. We're only waiting for the carriage. Now won't you accompany us, Annerly? Lady Dobson's my particular friend, and would be charmed to see you.

Ann. Thanks; but I don't victimise myself. I hate *matinées*.

Mrs With. Still, to oblige——

Ann. I never oblige. It doesn't pay.

Mrs With. Well; you won't lose much. Poor Lady Dobson has a mania for bringing out young geniuses, and has always such a stock of musical beginners on hand, that——

Ann. Yes; she's like the pythoiness at the Zoological some years back; she sits on the eggs of prodigies.

[*All laugh.*]

Mrs With. Only she doesn't hatch them.

Ann. And she's not so amiable as the pythoiness; she doesn't die after the incubation.

Major. [*Laughing.*] Too bad! Too bad!

Mrs With. *Méchant ! méchant !* But you hit her off splendidly—a photograph !

Ann. You see her with the eye of a friend.

Mrs With. Yes ; but the eye of a friend sometimes—
[*Pauses.*]

Ann. Exactly.

Mrs With. And talking of photographs, you know dear Lady Dobson's foible ?

Ann. Which of them ?

Mrs With. Why, her passion for having her likeness taken.

Major. She's insane on the point, which is the more droll because she's—she's—

Mrs With. Because she's not one of the Graces.

[*All laugh.*]

Major. Quite the reverse. Yet she has more than a hundred *cartes de visite* of herself.

Mrs With. And none of them suit. One day the portrait's unlike ; another day it's disagreeable.

Ann. Does she expect a miracle ? If it were agreeable, where would be the likeness ?

Mrs With. You're incorrigible. But I don't exaggerate ; she goes to the photographer daily when the sun shines.

Ann. If she were wise, she would wait for an eclipse. The sun might flatter her, if he were half blind.

[*All laugh ; those at back come forward to listen.*]

Mrs With. On my word, I'll not listen to you ; she's a dear, good creature, though she is an original. They do say that she's bringing up her niece for a surgeon.

Ann. She should have followed that profession herself.

Mrs With. She would have found no practice.

Ann. True ; but she would have created one. Amongst nervous children her very appearance would have ensured patients.

[*All laugh.*]

Mrs With. Well, in that case you would have the complaint and the remedy from the same source.

Ann. Yes ; and two systems of medicine at once. She

would have produced the illness by terror in massive doses, and antidoted it by good sense in Homeopathic quantities.

Hes. [*Indignantly.*] Mr Annerly !

Ann. I beg pardon.

Hes. I don't know whether this lady be your friend ; but she is at least—a woman !

Ann. I presume so.

Major. Undoubtedly, and the mother of a young suckling politician. She brought him up to independent principles and seven hundred a year.

Ann. On the strength of which, he sets up a conscience ; eh ? Why I know fellows with as many thousands who can't afford it.

[*All laugh but Hester, who retires displeased to a distance.*]

Mrs With. [*To ANNERLY.*] Come, a truce, a truce ! You've really been too hard upon dear Lady Dobson.

Ann. Who ? I, I ? O, I don't speak on my own authority. I've not even seen the lady.

Mrs With. Not seen her ?

Ann. No, indeed. I've merely adopted the report of her particular friend. [*Bows.*]

Mrs With. [*Striving to laugh off her vexation.*] Treason, treason ! Shameful !

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. [*To MAJOR.*] The carriage, sir.

Mrs Lor. Bid him drive round the lawn.

Major. The carriage, ladies.

Mrs With. [*To ANNERLY.*] You unmerciful, dangerous, witty creature ! I'm glad to escape from you. Come, Effy.

Major. Now, Camilla !

Cam. O ! I've dropped my bracelet.

Ann. I see it, where all treasures should be, at your feet. [*Kneels, picks up bracelet, and presents it to CAMILLA.*]

Cam. O ! Mr Annerly !

Ann. That's only fair, you know. Gold should sometimes be at the feet of beauty, considering how often beauty is at the feet of gold.

Cam. [*Perplexed.*] You're so amusing.

[*He clasps the bracelet.*]

Mrs With. [*Aside.*] Artful creature! She dropped it just to show off her wrist. [*Apart to EUPHEMIA.*] Effy, you've no resources; you drop nothing but your stitches. [*Aloud.*] Come, darling, it's high time. [*To ANNERLY.*] We shall meet at dinner.

Ann. Yes, when you must amuse us with an account of the *matinée*. So please observe it with the eye of a friend.

Mrs With. *Fi donc! Fi donc!* [*Audibly to MAJOR.*] He is so charmingly wicked.

Major. [*Apart to her.*] He's not to be compared with the men in the days of the Regent.

[*He goes out with MRS WITHERBY on his arm.*]

CAMILLA and EUPHEMIA follow them out.

HESTER is about to quit the room.

Ann. [*Changing his tone, and speaking with earnestness.*] Stay, Miss Lorrington! deign to accept my thanks.

Hes. [*Going.*] For what?

Ann. For a deserved reproof which a flippant presummer too seldom meets with.

[*Servant enters with shawls; MRS LORRINGTON takes one. Servant goes out.*]

Hes. I'm prone to be frank, Mr Annerly. When I find the many applaud a young man because he ridicules women, despises beauty in nature, expression in art, honesty in public life, and earnestness in everything, I venture to dissent from the majority, and to reserve my homage for a different kind of idol.

Tom. [*Aside.*] By jove! she lays it on.

Mrs Lor. Hester, I'm petrified. [*To ANNERLY.*] Believe me, she has not derived this unpolished demeanour from me.

Ann. Nature, madam, forms her favourites on various models.

Mrs Lor. You are too obliging ; and now, to terminate this discussion, are you inclined for a promenade ? Shall we walk to the beach ?

Ann. With pleasure ; allow me but a moment.

[*Turning to* HESTER.

Tom. [*Aside.*] I see ! he wants the mother out of the way. [*Apart to* MRS LORRINGTON.] May I say a word to you ?

[*Crosses to* MRS LORRINGTON, *takes shawl and puts it on her.*

Mrs Lor. With unqualified pleasure. [*Aside.*] On the subject of Lucy, I presume. [*Aloud.*] I'm at your disposal.

[*MRS LORRINGTON and TOM go out by window.*

Ann. Once more, Miss Lorrington, let me thank you for your candour, and confess——

Hes. O, pray don't confess ! Remember, mamma has enlisted you for a walk. [*Going.*

Ann. One moment.

Hes. Just now moments with me are precious.

Ann. Moments with you are indeed so ; that's why I beg for them.

Hes. [*Aside.*] How strange he is ! [*Aloud.*] Seriously, I'm busy collecting money for the families of some poor fishermen who were lost off the coast last week. I'll remain, if you like ; but mind I shall charge you a guinea for every minute of my stay.

[*Takes out watch and memorandum tablets.*

Ann. [*Bowing.*] The terms are most reasonable. [*Both sit on ottoman.*] It was an awful gale ; but some of the poor men I hear were saved.

Hes. Yes ; by the exertions of a brave young fellow, who had the appearance of a modern gentleman, and nevertheless a heart in his bosom. One minute gone, Mr Annerly.

[*Makes an entry on her tablets.*

Ann. O, fair play ! not a minute ; a second.

Hes. A minute by the watch.

Ann. Be it so, when talking with you, minutes seem seconds. And so you admire this young fellow?

Hes. The gallant man who risked his life for others? Yes, I admire him; do you?

Ann. [*Hesitating.*] O! yes — yes — yes — in moderation.

Hes. [*With keen irony.*] In moderation! What more could he expect from you? He was guilty of generous impulses, and your man of fashion laughs at impulse. I dare say he deranged himself to save these poor people; the spray must have damaged his coat and put his hair out of order.

Ann. [*Aside.*] Yes, I fancy it did.

Hes. Two minutes more by the watch; that's three guineas. [*She makes an entry on her tablets.*]

Ann. That watch is a hunter, I perceive.

Hes. Yes, sir, a hunter.

Ann. [*Aside.*] By Jove, if it were a racer, I should like to back it for the next Derby. [*Aloud.*] So, you think I don't admire your hero? Now, strange as it may appear, I do feel an interest in him.

Hes. Your condescension is gratifying.

Ann. Why so bitter? Won't you credit me with a spark of good feeling?

Hes. O yes, I'll give you credit for your feelings; but you must not expect any for your debt. I've now two minutes more against you. [*Makes entry on her tablets.*]

Ann. [*Laughing.*] Two minutes more? Agreed. If you calculate interest at the rate at which you amass principal, you'll soon be able to pay off the National Debt.

[*Voices are heard from terrace without—“ We want to see Mr Annerly. We must see the gentleman, to thank him.”*]

Ann. Voices! We shall be interrupted.

Enter TOM, hurriedly.

Tom. It's of no use, Annerly; I can keep your secret no longer.

Ann. What secret?

Tom. You're discovered, my boy! In the pocket of your overcoat, which you wrapped round one of the rescued lads, was found a letter with your name on it. The grateful fellows have tracked you here, and insist upon thanking you in person.

Hes. What is this, Mr Sutherland? You don't mean to say that Mr Annerly—

Tom. I mean that Mr Annerly is the man to whose efforts half a dozen honest fellows owe their lives.

Hes. And this happened?

Tom. In last week's gale; a few nights before we came here.

Hes. Mr Annerly, can you forgive me?

[*HESTER gives him her hand.*

Ann. Forgive you! dear lady. [*Kisses her hand; then, turning away, speaks aside.*] Now, if that girl marries any one else, I shall die a bachelor.

Hes. [*Aside.*] O, how false may be first impressions!

[*Voices are again heard without.*

Tom. [*Placing his arm in ANNERLY'S.*] Now, come along! 'Tis of no use shrinking; you can't repel these good souls, you know. [*To group of persons without, who now begin to come forward.*] Ahoy! ahoy! This way, my fine fellows! Here he is! [*Sailors, women, and children appear on terrace by window.*] Now then, my lads, three ringing cheers for him! Hip! hip! hip! hurrah!

[*As seamen cheer, TOM brings ANNERLY towards window. ANNERLY seems for a moment embarrassed, then rushes forward and shakes hands heartily with some of the seamen. Others press around him, grasping and shaking both his hands, while the rest cheer.*

ACT II.

SCENE.— *The grounds of MRS LORRINGTON'S villa ; various walks, garden seats ; view of the sea at back. Entrance to villa at side in distance.*

TOM SUTHERLAND and ANNERLY discovered in front of arbour.

Tom. Well, my dear boy, didn't I know you better than you knew yourself? Haven't I often told you that your indifference to your species in general, and women in particular, was a bit of a sham ; that while you affected to be a cynic, you were at heart one of the most romantic fellows alive? And here you are, after a few days, not only the accepted suitor of Miss Lorrington, but as madly in love with her as the hero of a French novel with his friend's wife.

Ann. Enjoy your triumph, my dear Sutherland ; with a prize like Hester, I can bear it. Though, on my word, at times I almost doubt the good fortune that has come to me so suddenly. What could she have seen in me, I wonder? However, I've no time to gossip. [*Going.*]

Enter SERVANT with two hats, one a garden hat. ANNERLY selects one.

Ann. This one, thank you. [*Servant goes out.*]

Tom. Stay, Frank. What could she see in you? This modesty is but another name for mistrust. Beware! That old wound of yours still rankles ; and because you've once been jilted, you doubt even where you love ; in fact, you're suspicious already.

Ann. Of Hester? Ridiculous! Why, she only accepted me last night.

Tom. [*Knowingly.*] Well, we shall see.

Ann. For heaven's sake, Tom, keep our engagement

secret. With me, love is sacred. I couldn't stand being quizzed by that selfish old major, with his veneer of politeness, or by Mrs Witherby with her veneer of candour.

Tom. To say nothing of the pretty niece and daughter whom you've so greatly obliged. Well, your secret is in no danger from me ; I only hope Mrs Lorrington will be silent.

Ann. She has promised to be so : the matter's safe with her.

Tom. Yes ; as safe as wine in a corked bottle when it leaks.

Ann. [*Impatiently.*] Still we must risk it.

Tom. Wait a while ; you take all my sympathy and give me none. You've placed me in a nice fix, old fellow. Your proposal to Hester makes my silence to Lucy seem doubly queer. I had a threatening letter from my uncle yesterday, and found the veteran peremptory. You know he clears off a family mortgage by the marriage, and I verily believe if I decline it, he will cut off my allowance.

Ann. In that case, Tom, remember we're brothers ; and brothers have one purse.

Tom. A thousand thanks, Frank ! I shall manage ; but, of course, I must propose to the girl.

Ann. And marry her ?

Tom. Certainly not ; I shall make her refuse me ; the fault will then be hers, and I shall escape the penalty.

Ann. You'd much better marry her.

[*LUCY crosses stage at back.*]

Tom. [*Observing her.*] By George, here she comes !

Ann. And charming she looks ! Well, I leave you to your tactics. [*He goes out.*]

Tom. Charming ! yes, but liberty's more so, and a wife on compulsion is like jam in a medicine spoon ; if it isn't nauseous, you think it is—now, if I can only propose to her so as to disgust her, I shall at once obey my uncle, and get off the marriage.

Enter LUCY by front walk. She seems lost in thought.

Lucy. [To herself, unheard by TOM, who sits at a distance.] Must I really marry without having any voice in the matter? Day by day, mamma persecutes me almost to desperation. Should Mr Sutherland propose, and I refuse him, she would make my life wretched,—perhaps turn me out of doors. However, he may not propose at all—ah! there he is. He doesn't avoid me as usual. O, if I could but disgust him, so as to keep him from proposing, or to make him draw back if he did propose! That would indeed be a *coup*! I should at once obey my mother, and escape my bridegroom. Its worth trying for.

Tom. [Aside.] There she stands, as much as to say, I'm waiting for an offer! Now then to turn matrimony into physic, and to give it a decided flavour of moral cod liver oil. [Advancing.] I've the pleasure of meeting you alone, Miss Lucy.

Lucy. Well, I suppose it must have come to that, Mr Sutherland; and after all, business is business.

Tom. [Aside.] All right! by her manner, its plain she means to reject me.

Lucy. [Sharply.] Well, Mr Sutherland?

Tom. Eh!

Lucy. Eh!

Tom. You spoke?

Lucy. Have you anything further to say?

Tom. [Aside.] O, I suppose I'm to offer her the cheek of a proposal, just that she may slap it with a refusal. [Aloud.] Yes, I've something to say; you are of course aware that there's a matter of some little interest to be settled between us?

Lucy. [Aside.] He's going to do it. [Aloud, in a business-like tone.] Exactly, go on.

Tom. [Surprised.] Eh?

Lucy. Go on.

Tom. [Aside.] So, she's not nervous. [Aloud.] I don't profess, Miss Lucy, to be a man of sentiment.

Lucy. [*Rather impatiently.*] Good ; go on.

Tom. And that we may have no misunderstanding after marriage—that is, if you care to accept me—

Lucy. I can't decide that yet ; go on.

Tom. [*Aside.*] She says nothing but “go on.” [*Aloud.*] Well, then, I repeat plainly, that I detest sentiment. If I marry, it will be with an eye to my own advantage.

Lucy. I presume so.

Tom. I mean to my pecuniary advantage. [*Aside.*] What a brute she'll take me for !

Lucy. [*Impatiently.*] That's a matter of course.

Tom. [*Surprised, aside.*] By Jove ! Oh, she doesn't understand me. [*Aloud.*] I mean that with me beauty's a trifle ; romance a folly. [*Aside.*] Hang it ! I'll pitch it strong. [*Aloud.*] With me, a wife is another name for freehold property and three per cents.

Lucy. [*Very impatiently.*] *Cela va sans dire, Monsieur.* Why need you tell me this ? I'm a girl of sense. [*Rather haughtily.*] I suppose after this fine preamble, something follows. [*Turns her head aside.*]

Tom. [*Aside.*] Good ; she despises me sufficiently. [*Aloud.*] Of course, something follows. You know that I aspire to the honour of your hand ?

Lucy. [*Dryly.*] For life, I suppose ?

Tom. Yes ; of course—it's a life investment.

Lucy. Humph ! [*After a pause, as if calculating.*] You must answer a few questions, and you must give me time.

Tom. [*Eagerly.*] By all means. Take your time, Miss Lucy.

Lucy. Though, I admit, I think favourably of your proposal.

Tom. Indeed !

Lucy. For I perfectly agree in your views of marriage.

Tom. [*Dismayed.*] Agree with them ! You mean it ?

Lucy. Yes ; like you, I hate sentiment. I'm a woman of the world, and laugh at the namby-pamby absurdity called love ! Let us be equally frank. As you would marry me for money, I would marry you (that is, if I do

marry you) for position—I would be a Baronet's wife—Lady Sutherland. Now, the main point is, in what does my prospect of that title consist?

Tom. [*Puzzled.*] How consist?

Lucy. [*Hesitating.*] Well—well—— [*With sudden decision.*] This is a matter of business, is it not?

Tom. It seems so.

Lucy. Then we must treat it as such. Well then, when are you likely to be Sir Thomas Sutherland?

Tom. That's not in my power to say.

Lucy. Why not?

Tom. How can I tell when my uncle means to die?

Lucy. Still there are indications. What age is he?

Tom. [*Sharply.*] Why, sixty.

Lucy. Sixty! So I should judge; he looks hearty.

Tom. Yes, he does.

Lucy. General health good?

Tom. Perfectly—except for a little gout.

Lucy. Humph! Gout! He has gout then? Where does it attack him?

Tom. [*Indignantly.*] Where? In his extremities.

Lucy. It has no tendency to the heart or brain?

Tom. Not that I am aware of.

Lucy. I'm delighted to hear it. Still you see that circumstance somewhat lessens the eligibility of your proposal.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Good heavens! She admits that she's speculating on the old fellow's death.

Lucy. I don't affect sentiment, Mr Sutherland. Your uncle's robust health is, for my purpose, a disadvantage. For anything I can see, he may yet live to be a father.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Here's a sweet creature to be the partner of one's bosom.

Lucy. Yet I grant sixty is a fair age; and when gout is once in the system no one can say where it will stop. By the way, Mr Sutherland, what is your own age!

Tom. [*Alarmed.*] What is my age. [*Aside.*] By Jove, she's calculating on my death too!

Lucy. [*Shaking her head, and speaking aside so as to be overheard.*] Ah, still healthy and vigorous. [*To TOM.*] However, as our views are so similar, I'll not forbid you to hope. I thank you for your offer, and will give it my best consideration. Meantime, I'm at the service of our guests, so you'll kindly excuse me.

Tom. Decidedly, I will.

Lucy. *Au revoir*, Mr Sutherland—at all events, we're congenial spirits.

[*Waves her hand to him, and goes off towards house.*]

Tom. Are we? What have I done? Actually proposed to this creature, and bound myself to wait for her decision! The picture I drew of myself, instead of disgusting, attracts her, and my capacity for inventing atrocities is nothing to hers for swallowing them. O Tom Sutherland! for a shrewd fellow you've made a precious bungling mess of it with your confounded tactics! My honour's engaged to her. How to get out of it? What to do?

[*Paces up and down in great excitement.*]

Enter FOX BROMLEY; he observes TOM, and approaches him.

Brom. [*Aside, with pleasant serenity.*] So, a gentleman in a state of excitement! A pity, poor fellow; but he can't help it. It's no fault of his; we're all the victims of our temperaments. [*TOM turns and observes him.*] Good morning, sir! May I ask whether Mrs Lorrington resides here?

Tom. Yes, she does.

Brom. She has visitors, I believe?

Tom. She has.

Brom. And——

Tom. [*Aside.*] Confound him! I'm in no mood for talk. [*Aloud.*] You'll get every information at the house there. [*Going.*]

Brom. Stay, my worthy friend. [*Stooping, and picking up a leaf.*] You were about to tread on this harmless

caterpillar. Poor fellow, poor fellow, let him live his life. *[Places leaf carefully on garden bed.]*

Tom. You are humane, sir.

Brom. Yes ; I'm humane, thanks to my organisation ; I am as I was made.

Tom. *[Aside.]* Why do I shrink so from this excellent man ? Good day to you.

Brom. Good day, my friend.

Tom. Good day. I shall not forget your kindness to the caterpillar. *[Goes out.]*

Brom. So ; Mrs Lorrington has guests here. Well, if I can't see her alone, I must meet her before them. Its very hard that a good-natured man like me should be forced to cause annoyance. I have always felt it hard. But necessity compels me ; we're all the victims of circumstance. Poor soul, my heart pleads for her. She never did you any wrong, says that kind monitor ; she's a woman and you should be pitiful. Very true ; but then there's a powerful logician on the other side, and here it is. *[Takes out and displays an almost empty purse.]* Fox Bromley !—it cries—I'm all but empty ; unless I'm replenished you will have no means of enjoying life ; you may even want the means to live ; and, surely Providence meant a man to live, or why was he born ? Yes ; I admit the force of the reasoning. *[Putting purse into his pocket.]* It's a duty to be generous, but its a higher duty to exist. Alas, my good old friend, painful as it may be, I must levy a fresh tax on you. So now, I'll knock at the door. Ah ! why wasn't I born rich that I might indulge in the luxury of good nature ? *[Goes out.]*

Enter MAJOR PRICE, MRS WITHERBY, CAMILLA, and EUPHEMIA.

Major. *[To* MRS WITHERBY.] Expedition, indeed ! And you regard the matter as settled ?

Mrs With. Can you doubt it, Major ? Only look at Mrs Lorrington. Poor woman, observe her meaning glances when Hester and Annerly are together ! The

fact is, the dear creature is bursting with her secret ; its a sort of a rush of vanity to the brain, and unless she's allowed to get rid of it, I believe she'll die of moral congestion.

Cam. As for Annerly, he's on thorns whenever she speaks.

Major. At all events, Miss Hester seems to have played her cards well.

Cam. And she affected to despise the man ; of course that was just to pique him.

Mrs With. Shocking duplicity, wasn't it ?

Cam. [*Rather excitedly.*] I call it unprincipled.

[MAJOR *turns into one of the walks.*

Mrs With. [*Laughing.*] Nonsense, love ! any woman would angle for such a salmon as Annerly ; to get angry is simply to jerk your line out of the water and show that you haven't had a nibble. For my part, I think Hester not only clever, but most praiseworthy. [*Apart to EUPHEMIA.*] Ah ! such a daughter is indeed a blessing !

Euph. [*Apart to MRS WITHERBY.*] I'm sure, mamma, I did my best.

Mrs With. [*Severely.*] Hush ! Don't expose yourself.

Euph. [*Apart to her.*] Really, husband-catching seems quite a science ; I've not brains for it.

Mrs With. Science, indeed ! with woman it is an instinct. The girl who wants it is absolutely unfeminine.

Euph. [*Aside.*] I'm sure it's enough to make one hate the man ; and what's more, I love somebody else, though he is poor. [*MRS LORRINGTON'S laugh is heard outside.*

Cam. So, here come our hostess and the happy pair !

Enter MRS LORRINGTON ; also ANNERLY, TOM, HESTER, and LUCY.

Mrs Lor. [*With forced laughter.*] My dear Annerly, I must positively lay a prohibition on your wit. I'm exhausted with laughter ; on my word, Frank—what am I saying ? Pardon me, Mr Annerly.

[ANNERLY *bows, annoyed.*

Cam. [*Apart to MRS WITHERBY.*] Frank! Frank! observe how she Frank's him.

Mrs With. [*Apart to CAMILLA.*] Very natural. She likes to advertise her brilliant connection; only, while she uses placards and posters, we should resort to the diamond type of a hint, or an *on dit*. However, for fun, I'll try to bring her to a climax. [*Aloud.*] My dear Hester, how remarkably bright and well you look to-day.

[HESTER bows.]

Mrs Lor. [*Advancing, simpering, and shaking her parasol at MRS WITHERBY.*] Now that's positively unfair of you. I know what these sly inuendoes mean.

Major. [*Laughing.*] Inuendoes, my dear lady! What inuendoes?

Mrs Lor. [*Affectedly.*] O major!

Tom [*Aside.*] As I said; the corked bottle is beginning to leak.

Ann. [*Aside to Tom.*] By Jove, it's all coming out!

Tom. Yes, for vanity escapes like gas; shut the door on it, and it's out at the key-hole.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] Poor Annerly!

Mrs Lor. [*Tapping MRS WITHERBY with her parasol.*] You naughty, naughty woman! How dare you have so much penetration?

Hes. [*Annoyed, aside to MRS LORRINGTON.*] O mamma!

Mrs Lor. [*To MRS WITHERBY.*] See, you're suffusing the dear girl's cheek with blushes! Like me, she's so painfully retiring.

Cam. [*Playfully.*] What! is there a secret?

Tom. [*Aside.*] There won't be long.

Lucy. [*Reprovingly, apart to MRS LORRINGTON.*] Mamma!

Mrs Lor. [*To CAMILLA.*] Secret! Oh, don't appeal to me; the matter's too delicate.

Mrs With. I guess it! I guess it!

Ann. [*Aside.*] This is what I call inhuman; to lay bare the attachment of two sensitive lovers is a sort of

moral vivisection which should only be performed under chloroform.

Cam. [To MRS WITHERBY.] And what do you guess?

Ann. [Aside.] I must put an end to it. [Aloud.] The disclosure, ladies, which your kind interest forces from me rather prematurely, is still one which I am proud to make. I am the accepted suitor of this lady. [Turns round, and finds himself face to face with TOM.] The fact of her respect for me gives me at least one title to yours.

Tom. [Aside.] Come, that's pluck.

Mrs With. [Shaking hands with HESTER.] My dear Hester, I congratulate you! To spare you and Annerly, I speak for everybody.

Major. [To MRS WITHERBY.] Certainly; certainly. Happy fellow.

Cam. We are all equally delighted.

Euph. [Aside.] I'm sure I am. I'm rid of a task.

[ANNERLY, TOM, and HESTER retire up the ground.

Mrs Lor. [With complacent condescension, to MAJOR and MRS WITHERBY.] And now that Frank has divulged the secret, let me assure you that no position to which my daughter may attain, will ever blind us to the claims of old friends.

Major. [Aside to MRS WITHERBY.] What impertinence! She's patronising us.

Mrs Lor. No; it's not the difference of mere lucre, nor even superior connections, that should cancel the bonds of attachment. Did we become even *crème à la crème*, we should never overlook our former associates.

[MRS WITHERBY makes her a low curtsy.

Major. [Aside, indignantly.] Condescending, indeed!

Mrs With. [Laughing aside.] The woman's a treasure. *Crème à la crème!*

[MRS WITHERBY and MAJOR withdraw to back conversing. Enter LUCY. She approaches TOM, who feigns not to see her, and joins CAMILLA and EUPHEMIA.

Tom. Miss Witherby !

[Offers her his arm and goes out with her.

Lucy. [Aside.] Excellent, he avoids me ! [Following them.] Ah, Mr Sutherland !

[CAMILLA and LUCY go out conversing at opposite side. MRS LORRINGTON approaches ANNERLY and HESTER.

Mrs Lor. Well, dear Frank.

Ann. [Coldly.] Well, Mrs Lorrington.

Mrs Lor. [Aside.] Indeed, how grand we are ! Does he think he has condescended to my Hester ? I'll teach him differently.—Yes, dear Frank, I'm quite charmed that the whole affair has transpired. My dear Hester will no longer be invaded by suitors.

Hes. How can you talk so ?

Mrs Lor. Nay ; you know it was only last year that you refused Sir Peregrine O'Reily,—the presumed lineal descendant, Frank, of an illustrious Irish prince,—but unfortunately a gentleman of slender finances.

[HESTER makes signs of vexation.

Ann. [Laughing.] Poor fellow ! that was his drawback, then ?

Mrs Lor. Then, this year, there was amongst others the young and interesting Mr Paul Gresham, whom she captivated at Scarborough,—a millionaire, I believe, Frank ; but then you see his ancestral antecedents were dubious, though I fancy he ran you rather hard.

Ann. Ah ! I should like to know Gresham.

Mrs Lor. Yes ; but oddly enough since you came here, Mr Gresham has renewed his proposals to her by letter. In fact, Hester has not yet replied to them.

Hes. [Aside.] Has she not ?

Ann. Indeed ! [Aside.] Well, this is agreeable news for an accepted suitor. [SERVANT enters from house.

Ser. Mr Fox Bromley.

[HESTER and ANNERLY sit on a garden seat.

Mrs Lor. Whom did you announce ?

Ser. Mr Fox Bromley, ma'am.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside, and agitated.*] It was he, then ! [*To SERVANT.*] Say that I'm engaged. [*Enter BROMLEY from house.*] I can't see him—I won't ;—wait !—wait !

[*BROMLEY comes forward.*]

Ser. Here is the gentleman ! [*SERVANT goes out.*]

Ann. [*Apart to HESTER.*] Your mother seems agitated.

Brom. My dear Mrs Lorrington, I knew you'd excuse an old friend's freedom. I felt sure of my welcome.

[*Offers MRS LORRINGTON his hand, which she takes hesitatingly.*]

Mrs Lor. [*With constraint.*] I'm glad to see you.

Ann. [*Aside.*] She hardly looks so.

Brom. I discovered your address by the merest accident. This is a delicious place of yours. I'm almost tempted to speculate on your hospitality.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside, alarmed.*] Good heaven ! His presence here might ruin me.—Mr Bromley, you force me to be downright. If I had desired your company, I should have asked for it.

Brom. [*Smiling.*] My dear lady, you really make me feel like an intruder.

[*MAJOR and MRS WITHERBY return towards front.*]

Mrs Lor. I'm glad that you understand plain English.

Brom. Do I then intrude ?

[*Re-enter TOM and CAMILLA by side-walk.*]

Ann. It seems to me, sir, that you do. If you would have me think otherwise——

Brom. [*Smiling blandly.*] I'm not aware, my young friend, that your good opinion has any remarkable interest for me ?

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] Have I gone too far ?

Brom. [*To ANNERLY.*] You think that I should quit the house, I presume, Mrs Lorrington ?

Mrs Lor. Oh, no, no ! At least, not in ill-feeling.

Brom. Certainly not. [*Aside.*] Now, why will she force me to give her a painful lesson ?

[*HESTER and CAMILLA go out.*]

Tom. [*Aside.*] What is this mystery ?

Mrs With. [Recognising BROMLEY.] What! Mr Fox Bromley?

Brom. [Bowling.] Madam——

Mrs With. How! Have you forgotten your visits to Mrs Lorrington, when we were at Spa last summer?

Brom. Mrs Witherby! [Shakes hands.]

Mrs With. I assure you I have not forgotten how you entertained us with your pleasant anecdotes and gossip.

Brom. Anecdotes! Now that's remarkable, for I was just going to tell dear Mrs Lorrington the strangest anecdote about an old acquaintance of hers.

Mrs With. Is it private?

Mrs Lor. [Eagerly.] Yes, yes. I fancy it is.

Brom. Oh, by no means.

Mrs With. I hope it's ill-natured.

Brom. Not in the least. It relates to the wonderful luck of a pretty, coquettish young lady, who lived a good many years since in North Wales.

Cam. [Who has returned, advancing.] Well, who was she?

Brom. Neither more nor less than the niece of an inn-keeper, at whose house I first met my good friend here, during a tour. [To MRS LORRINGTON.] I'm sure you remember Betsy Parlett?

Mrs Lor. No—Oh yes, yes—I think so. [Confused.]

Brom. She was a clever girl; accomplished, too—that is, for her station in life. Didn't you think so?

Mrs Lor. I forget all about her. But, Mr Bromley——

Mrs With. The story! the story!

Brom. Is simply this: I've lately discovered that Betsy Parlett, the innkeeper's niece, married a man of large fortune, which she now enjoys. She's a widow, you must know, Mrs Lorrington.

Mrs Lor. Oh! A widow, is she?

Brom. And moves, I'm told, in very good society——

Mrs Lor. [Interrupting.] That's the end of it, I suppose. And now, Mr Bromley, pray consider yourself at

home here. Do run over to the hotel, and tell them to send your luggage.

Brom. Thanks ; as you're so kindly pressing——

Mrs Lor. At once now, I insist ; and just allow me a word with you.

Brom. *Au revoir*, then, ladies.

[*MRS LORRINGTON and BROMLEY retire, conversing.*

Tom. [*Aside.*] How's this ? I thought at first they were quarrelling.

Major. [*To MRS WITHERBY.*] What can this mean ? Did you observe how confused she got at the mention of that Betsy Parlett ?

Cam. And how eager she was to stop him ?

Mrs With. Oh ! yes—yes ! [*BROMLEY goes out.*

Major. Now, suppose we take a little harmless revenge for her patronising airs, and tease her mildly.

Mrs With. Be it so ; but we must not carry the frolic too far. [*MRS LORRINGTON returns. TOM joins the group.*

Mrs With. [*To MRS LORRINGTON.*] We are all saying, my dear, what an acquisition we shall have in Mr Bromley. He's so pleasant, and has such a fund of anecdote.

Major. Yes ; that was a strange story about the Welsh barmaid, wasn't it ?

Mrs Lor. [*Sharply.*] What Welsh barmaid ?

Cam. The landlord's niece, you know ; Betsy—Betsy—

Tom. Betsy Parlett was the name.

Mrs With. [*To MRS LORRINGTON.*] You surely remember her ?

Mrs Lor. No ; not in the least.

Major. An accomplished young lady, by Mr Bromley's account.

Mrs With. I can fancy her—now stirring negus with her delicate hand ; now ravishing the ears of her customers with a sonata on the pianoforte.

Major. Now giving directions to the pot-boy ; now warbling out the words of a chansonette.

Cam. Quite a romance ! Just think now of her marrying a fortune, and getting into society !

Mrs Lor. [*Excitedly.*] What of that?

Mrs With. Where now she patronises, perhaps, people of good family.

Major. And condescends to promise them the distinction of her notice.

Mrs Lor. [*Carried away.*] Well, and if she does? If stuck-up people are not too fine to eat her dinners and borrow her carriage, and accept other things, I don't see why they should gird at her. Before I would take favours from people, and laugh at them in my sleeve, I would sleep under a hedge, and breakfast on turnips. She's flesh and blood—isn't she? and I don't know that high and mighty folks are made after any better receipt. Ha! ha! [*Restraining herself with an effort, and resuming her affected tone.*] But, after all, what's this to us? Of course, the story's impossible. Whoever heard of a girl of that sort acquiring manners, and elegance, and the correct deportment of society? [*Laughing.*] Romance indeed! My dear Mrs Witherby, I should expect you to write admirable sensation novels. You have all the invention for it; you have indeed. And now, come; the young people are anxious for croquet, and we shall find entertainment in looking on.

Mrs With. Let's go then, by all means.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] Thank heaven, I'm myself again.

Major. [*Exchanging glances with CAMILLA.*] Humph!

[MRS LORRINGTON, MRS WITHERBY, MAJOR, and CAMILLA go out; TOM, who has been listening, looks after them.]

Tom. Well, if that Fox Bromley hasn't some power over you, Mrs Lorrington; and if Betsy Parlett isn't somehow mixed up with your antecedents, I'm not shrewd.

[*Follows them out. Re-enter ANNERLY and HESTER.*]

Hes. Oh, I see the gardener there! Frank, just pluck me one of those white roses. [HESTER runs out.]

Ann. [*To himself.*] How happy she seems, how full of life. They say love's pensive. Now if she loved me as I love her, could she have quite such good spirits?

[*Plucks two white rosebuds from centre bed.*] How droll of her mother to tell me she had already dismissed two suitors,—one for want of position, the other for want of money. I won't believe it. Why, with these disadvantages, I might have been number three! It's odd now, that that rich fellow—that Paul Gresham—should just have renewed his offer to her!—Shame on me! Am I mean enough to suspect her? Ah, the old sore again! Because one woman deceived me, I almost doubt the best of her sex. Still I wish she hadn't such strong common sense. If she had only a trifle more sentiment; if she would now and then be a little melancholy.

[*Re-enter HESTER, with geraniums. He presents her with white roses.*

Hes. Now stand still. There's a reward for your patience. [*Showing a small bouquet of geraniums.*

Ann. Thanks, thanks! Let me kiss the bouquet-holder. [*Kisses her hand.*

Hes. [*Placing the flowers in his coat.*] There now!

Ann. And, so, darling! This Fox Bromley was an old friend of your father's?

Hes. Yes; of my poor father, who died when I was a child. Mr Bromley only appears at long intervals, and seems always to cause my mother annoyance; perhaps in money matters, for, I believe, he has the management of her property.

Ann. Ah, money, money! It's sure to be a plague one way or the other. Either one runs after it wildly like the world in general; or one has too much of it. [*Pensively.*] Here am I, with twenty thousand a year; and you, too, will be rich.

Hes. [*Laughing.*] A distressing state of affairs, isn't it? But might it not be worse to want money?

Ann. [*Aside.*] I wish she wouldn't be so confoundedly practical. [*To her.*] I don't know that. In my opinion, a man and woman who love each other, ought to be poor; at least, one of them ought.

Hes. Why so?

Ann. Why, how can two people who have nothing on earth to wish for, prove their attachment? Now if you were a poor governess—[*Walks about arm-in-arm with her*—with forty pounds a year; with one dress of worn merino for week days, and a faded silk for Sundays; with thick, clumsy boots, instead of dainty Balmorals; darned gloves of cloth, instead of primrose kid; obliged to trudge to your task in all weathers, and to return at night to a third-floor room, lit by a single candle; why, then, I could prove my love. What joy to throw my fortune into your lap, and to cry—Cinderella, thou art a princess!

Hes. Delightful! And suppose you were a music master?

Ann. [*Archly.*] Which you know I can't be till I sing with expression.

Hes. Nay; let me go on. Suppose, then, you were a poor music master, with expensive lodgings, a passion for thorough-breds, a nice taste in wines, a choice fancy in dress, a weakness for diamond rings and studs, and a hundred a year for everything. There would be a position! Of course, I should be your favourite pupil; I should observe your melancholy—read the secret of a noble soul struggling with misfortune. Annerly, I should cry, take me! Take with me wealth, thorough-breds, wine-cellars, West-End tailors, and diamonds; your Hester bestows them! Now that's what you would like!

Ann. [*Rather piqued, and with forced laughter.*] Yes; that's very droll! Capital! Ha, ha! You're in high spirits, Hester.

Hes. Stay; wouldn't it be an improvement for us both to be poor?

Ann. [*Aside.*] She's laughing at me.

Hes. That would be perfect. First, we should escape the Income-tax.

Ann. [*Impatiently.*] Income-tax.

Hes. We should have no sordid cares—rent rolls, divi-

dends, banker's cheques. The rise and fall of the funds would be nothing to us. No gross butcher should ever invade our porch; we should grow our own roses; and, if we could condescend to be hungry, we should feed upon the leaves.

Ann. Go on, Hester. [*Turning aside, annoyed.*] She hasn't a particle of sentiment.

Hes. [*Seriously.*] What, Frank! have you taken the mirth of a light heart for earnest? I've vexed you!

Ann. [*Trying to rally himself.*] Well, well; let me be vexed. If we can't get romance out of poverty, we must get it out of a quarrel.

Hes. No, Frank;—[*Laying her hand on his arm*].—peace and trust are the food of love. When it needs the excitement of a quarrel, it is already diseased, and grows weaker with every repetition of the stimulant.

Ann. Right, right, my darling; forgive me.

Hes. [*Tenderly, and giving him her hand.*] Ah, Frank! you don't deserve to know how happy you've made me.

[*He kisses her hand. At same time, SERVANT enters with letters.*]

Ser. [*To HESTER.*] Visitors, ma'am; Mrs Lorrington wishes you to see them.

Hes. Very well.

Ser. [*To ANNERLY.*] Letters, just received, sir.

[*Gives letters.*]

Ann. Thank you. Quite a budget. [*SERVANT goes out.*]

Hes. I must leave you to your letters, Frank! Mind now; no more suspicions!

Ann. My angel, I'll not offend again.

Hes. [*Smiling.*] I shall punish you if you do; beware!

Ann. Dear creature! From this moment I'll trust her implicitly. I wonder if that fellow saw me. Now then, for my letters. [*Glancing over the envelopes.*] Humph! cousin Bella's hand—my affectionate cousin Bella, who was so blind to my merits till that wonderful oculist, Good-Fortune, couched her eyes. Circulars, I fancy; more

of them. So, from my solicitor. Why, here's a postmark a month old! Venice, Milan, Geneva, Paris,—it must have followed me half over the continent.

[*Opens letter and reads.*]

“*My Dear Sir,—*

“I trust this letter will find you without delay. I regret to inform you that a claim has been set up to the entailed estates which you inherited from your cousin, the late Mr George Annerly. It is alleged that his brother, Captain Annerly, who died a year before him in New Zealand, contracted there an obscure marriage, and that he has left an infant son. You are aware that all correspondence between the two brothers had long ago ceased. To this fact, and to the great distance from England, the guardians of the child ascribe the delay in their claim. I regret to add that the matter looks serious. Unless the certificate which I have seen be forged, there is great reason to fear that the son of the late Captain Annerly will establish his claim as heir-at-law.—Waiting your commands, I am, dear sir, your faithful servant,

“William Acton.”

What! my cousin's brother left a son—that son the heir! Is this credible?

Enter TOM with a Hampshire newspaper in his hand.

Tom. [*Aside.*] How absorbed he looks. A letter in his hand! I hope there's no truth in this ugly paragraph. My dear fellow, are you dreaming on your legs?

Ann. On my life, I wish I were.

Tom. Why so?

Ann. Because, if I am awake, and if my news here be well founded, I've lost the bulk of my fortune.

Tom. Are you serious?

Ann. Well, it's rather a dull joke if I'm not. Of course I shall look sharply into the facts.

Tom. And should they prove true?

Ann. I must bear it, my boy; I must bear it. And

by Jove, Tom, it would be a hard blow ; still it would have its bright side.

Tom. Well, old fellow, you're a philosopher.

Ann. I'm in earnest ; what a proof should I then have of Hester's affection. No longer the man of fortune, with his luxury and display ; but a plain country nobody with a few hundreds a year left me by my father—Hester mine in spite of all—mine for my own sake and nothing else ! Gad, Tom, it would be a dream of romance !

Tom. [*Shaking his head.*] Pshaw, sentiment ! I rather suspect that Romance is a delicate lady, who only dreams well on dainty food. Give her the coarse diet of poverty, and ten to one she has the nightmare. But seriously, as the matter has got in the papers——

Ann. The papers ! ah, I forgot my letter was a month old.

Tom. Here's the *Hampshire News* with a paragraph ; but it treats the matter as mere rumour. Major Price, too, a Hampshire man, has just received the same paper ; and see, here he comes with Mrs Witherby. I'll wager now that they have already seen the paragraph, and are flocking like vultures to the death of your prosperity.

Ann. You're right ; there's a kind of commiserating enjoyment in their looks.

Enter MRS WITHERBY, CAMILLA, EUPHEMIA, and
MAJOR *with newspaper.*

Ann. Ah, my dear major ! any county news ?

Major. News, my dear Annerly ? No, no, no. Good heavens ! that I should have been so thoughtless !

[*Affects sympathy, and puts paper in his pocket.*]

Ann. What's the matter ? I declare you all look as doleful as if you had heard of the good fortune of a friend.

Mrs With. [*Rather coldly.*] Your remark is uncivil.

Ann. True ; but yesterday it would have been witty. Ah, Miss Price, I must indeed be ruined, for my friends tell me of my faults.

Cam. [*Coldly.*] You speak in riddles, Mr Annerly.

Mrs With. [*Aside.*] Why, he's as gay as ever. Oh, the report is groundless. [*To him.*] Ah, slanderer, didn't I always tell you of your faults? And if you were ruined, I fancy that I and my Effy here would only like you the better. Ruined indeed!

Ann. [*Laughing.*] I can't promise that I am; but if I should be, you shall have the first news of it.

Mrs With. Hush, now! You incorrigible, provoking, delightful cynic!

Ann. Cynic? Oh no. The world must have amusement. In old times, it was the fight between man and beast in the arena; to-day, it's the struggle of a reputation with slander, or of a friend with misfortune. Excuse me for the present. If I should fight in the amphitheatre, you shall all of you have front places. [*He goes out smiling.*]

Major. I call that impertinent.

Cam. Oh, he must be original.

Major. To have such an opinion of his fellow-creatures! In the Regent's time——

Mrs With. [*Laughing.*] I suppose then people never doubted their friends.

Major. Madam, no man of breeding ever told his doubt.

Mrs With. That makes all the difference. O Mr Sutherland, you're intimate with Annerly. Now, in confidence, what's the truth as to this report?

Tom. As to the loss of his fortune?

Mrs With. Exactly.

Major. Yes; pray give us your opinion.

Cam. Do, Mr Sutherland.

Tom. Well, he didn't deny the report.

Major. No, he didn't; and that looks bad.

Tom. On the other hand, he's in such capital spirits.

Mrs With. Just so; quite unlike a ruined man.

Tom. However, the matter's got into the papers.

Cam. Aye; and, depend on it, there's no smoke without fire.

Tom. Still, they only give it as a rumour.

Cam. But what do you think yourself?

Tom. Not to be rash, and weighing all the circumstances *pro* and *con.*, I think it's a puzzle.

Mrs With. But do you know anything?

Tom. Well, I know one thing.

Major. And that is?

Tom. That whether his good spirits be natural or assumed, whether the statements in the newspapers be authentic or groundless, whether there will be legal proceedings or none——

Chorus. Yes, yes!

Tom. Whether, in a word, he will lose his fortune or keep it——

Chorus. That's the point!

[*Pause.*]

Tom. Time will show.

ACT III.

SCENE.—*An apartment in MRS LORRINGTON'S villa,
as in Act I.*

TOM SUTHERLAND *discovered*; enter ANNERLY.

Tom. Back at last! Well; who is this mysterious visitor, with whom you've been so long closeted?

Ann. Who? Mr Acton, my solicitor. [TOM *rises.*]

Tom. Why, you heard from him only two hours since.

Ann. True; but I had already written to him, with my address here; he put himself at once into the train, and arrived shortly after his letter.

Tom. Well, old fellow, what does he report?

Ann. Simply that if the documents from New Zealand prove authentic, Captain Annerly's son is certainly heir-at-law. Unless fraud should be discovered—which there is no reason to suspect—I shall not contest his evident rights.

Tom. And the upshot is?——

Ann. That I am, comparatively, a poor and obscure man. I shall have fewer hundreds than I had before thousands——

the six or seven hundred a year, in fact, of my poor father's freehold.

Tom. [*Shaking hands with him warmly.*] Frank, my boy, you bear it admirably ; there will be many to lament your reverses. I have just had a letter from poor old Dominie Sampson, as I call him, full of gratitude for your kindness. In short, he was on the point of starting for England, and expected to arrive here to-day, to thank you in person.

Ann. All right on that point. I spoke to Acton about your good old tutor, and he has no doubt that the guardians will give him the little bit of patronage that I promised.

Tom. You're a trump to remember him in the midst of your own troubles. You deserve to be happy, Frank. And you still think yourself safe with Hester ?

Ann. Safe ? I could as soon doubt of my life. Of course, I shall tell her all, and give her the power of breaking off the engagement. But that she would do so—I won't wrong her by such a thought !

Tom. Yet you half doubted her this morning.

Ann. Not seriously—or only for a moment.

Tom. She knows nothing as yet.

Ann. No ; she drove off with some visitors to see Shanklin. Confound these visitors ! They make as free with a man's betrothed as if she were his umbrella. By the way she talked of walking home by the beach. I'll go and meet her.

[*Rings bell.*]

Tom. Under this blazing sun ? Why, the beach is just an extensive gridiron. Depend on it, she'll not walk back.

Ann. I'll take my chance.

Enter SERVANT.

Ann. I'll trouble you for my hat.

Ser. Yes, sir.

[*SERVANT goes out.*]

Ann. I can't keep quiet, Sutherland. On the principle that like cures like, the heat without may allay the fever

within. Not that I'm at all restless ; or, if I am, it's with happiness. In an hour I shall know my fate.

Re-enter SERVANT with two hats, one a garden hat.

Ann. [*Selecting one.*] Thank you ; this one. [*SERVANT goes out.*] Wish me well, old boy.

Tom. [*Shaking his hand.*] Heartily.

Ann. Not that I doubt her, mind—not that I doubt her. [*He hurries out by window.*]

Tom. Poor fellow ! It's all very well to say that ; but he has cause for doubt. There may be women who don't care for wealth and position ; but they're a sort of human aloe, and blossom once in a century. Still, it would be mean in her to desert him—selfish, cruel ! Stuff, stuff, Tom ; a shrewd hand like you talking sentiment ! Well, there's little enough of it in my own courtship. I wonder, now, whether any other fellow was ever indulged with a charmer like mine—a lady who plainly tells you she marries you for the chance of a title, and who speculates upon the death of its present owner, as if she were an actuary in a life assurance. By Jove, I like practicality ; but, after all, it's a masculine virtue. What shall I do to induce this girl to refuse me ? [*LUCY appears at door.*] Why, here she is ! Her very dress seems to rustle with strong-mindedness.

LUCY enters.

Lucy. Oh, you're here. I want a few words with you.

Tom. [*Aside.*] There's no denying she's pretty—a head of Venus in flint. [*Aloud.*] I'm quite at your service.

Lucy. Then, as you're a friend of Annerly's, you can doubtless tell me all about this strange report.

Tom. What report ?

Lucy. As to the probable loss of his fortune. I had it from Major Price, and it's in the papers.

Tom. [*Aside.*] This sounding me looks ill for Annerly.

Lucy. Of course it's a matter of deep interest to us.

Tom. Of course.

Lucy. As it so nearly concerns my sister.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Mercenary creature ! She'll persuade Hester to reject him ! [*Aloud.*] And you would naturally put her on her guard ?

Lucy. How on her guard ?

Tom. As to Annerly's affairs.

Lucy. She has a right to know them, sir.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Here's a Shylock in petticoats ! [*Aloud.*] Certainly ; and, no doubt, she'll use her right like a woman of business.

Lucy. What do you mean ?

Tom. Need you ask, Miss Lucy ? You in whom Nature has combined a woman's grace with a man's eye to the main chance ! Need you ask whether it isn't all-important to a lady to know whether she marries a fortune and social standing with the necessary encumbrance of a husband, or whether she marries the mere human encumbrance without any of these advantages,—whether——

Lucy. [*Interrupting him indignantly.*] Mr Sutherland !

Tom. Yes ; I'm all attention.

Lucy. If I understand you, you mean—you mean that my sister Hester, having accepted Mr Annerly in his prosperity, would desert him in his misfortunes ?

Tom. [*Surprised.*] Why, yes—yes—I believe I do. Don't you mean it ?

Lucy. I brand Hester—dear, noble Hester—with such meanness ! I shouldn't deserve to be her sister.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Am I awake ? [*Aloud.*] Why were you so eager then to hear of Annerly's affairs ?

Lucy. Because he is dear to me for Hester's sake—because I would show him that adversity cannot lessen my respect and regard for him.

Tom. This from you ! I'm confounded.

Lucy. Very likely. I don't expect my feelings to be intelligible to a mind like yours.

Tom. Miss Lucy——

Lucy. Excuse me, I've not done. Your mean opinion

of my sister is an insult to her. From this moment let the farce between us end. I wouldn't marry you if you were the only biped alive that wore a coat.

Tom. [*Aside.*] This can't be a jest. Her eyes flash, her cheek glows! On my life, anger becomes her.—Now, one word, Miss Lucy!

Lucy. Well, sir?

Tom. Why won't you marry me?

Lucy. Because I despise you.

Tom. For my mean, grovelling ideas—eh?

Lucy. You define them accurately.

Tom. And, pray, what kind of ideas were yours when you agreed to take me for the reversion of a title, and flatteringly calculated my value by the chances of my uncle's life?

Lucy. Shall I tell you the truth?

Tom. Yes; if it's not inconvenient.

Lucy. Well, then, here it is. My poor mother had set her heart upon my marrying you. She threatened me with I know not what penalties, if I refused you. I had only one course left; it was to make you refuse me.

Tom. Indeed!—I'm enlightened.

Lucy. So I strove to disgust you.

Tom. Thank you; I perceive.

Lucy. But I couldn't disgust you.

Tom. Excuse me; don't be too sure of that.

Lucy. I couldn't foresee that your views were mercenary; and that, instead of recoiling from me like a man of spirit, you would persist in seeking me for my fortune.

Tom. One moment!—Shall I tell you the truth?

Lucy. Yes; if it's not inconvenient.

Tom. My uncle had set his heart upon my marrying you. He threatened me with I know not what penalties unless I proposed to you.

Lucy. Mr Sutherland!

Tom. I had only one course left. It was to make you refuse me. I therefore strove to disgust you.

Lucy. And your scheme succeeded.

Tom. Well, for that matter, so did yours.

Lucy. What! Did you really despise me?

Tom. Thoroughly.

Lucy. You positively mean this?

Tom. Except as a point of honour, I wouldn't have married you though you had been the only biped alive that wore a petticoat.

Lucy. Then you withdraw your suit?

Tom. You've already rejected it.

Lucy. And you're not angry?

Tom. Eternally grateful.

Lucy. My dear Mr Sutherland!

[Offers her hand cordially.]

Tom. My dear Miss Lucy! [Grasps her hand heartily.]

Lucy. We shall be the best friends in the world. Now you must be kind to me and break this matter to my mother. Not to-day, for she seems in bad spirits. She often is so when that mysterious Fox Bromley is with us. To-morrow, perhaps.

Tom. What am I to say?

Lucy. Well—that our tempers are incompatible—that our union would have been wretched—especially to you.

Tom. Pardon me, especially to you. It was you who broke off the match.

Lucy. For which you were eternally grateful.

Tom. Did I say that?

Lucy. Oh yes; recollect yourself.

Tom. Then it was a piece of confounded ill-breeding.

Lucy. [Smiling.] On reflection, it wasn't flattering. However, seriously, you must help me. I've a little scheme. [Looks off to window.] Oh, see, yonder are my mother and Mr Bromley! How troubled she looks! That man's becoming odious to me. They're coming here, Mr Sutherland. Let's avoid them.

Tom. Let's take a little turn and discuss your little scheme.

Lucy. Which you seem quite impatient to carry out. But don't break it to my mother to-day.

Tom. Mustn't I? Well, then, I won't. [*Aside.*] And, by Jove, I'm not sure that I shall to-morrow; no, nor the next day, nor the day after that.

Lucy. [*Going out by door.*] Now, Mr Sutherland!

Tom. Shylock in petticoats, did I call her? She's an angel in book-muslin! [*Follows LUCY out.*]

Enter MRS LORRINGTON and FOX BROMLEY by window.

Mrs Lor. [*Much agitated, sitting on couch.*] Leave me, leave me! I can listen to you no longer. My very brain seems to turn.

Brom. My dear lady——

Mrs Lor. Have done, I say; don't dear-lady me!

Brom. I only entreat you to be reasonable. Suppose, now, I were to take you at your word—to leave the house—to see you no more?

Mrs Lor. Oh, what happiness!

Brom. For half an hour you might think so;—not longer. Suppose me gone, all my demands refused. You would have a sense of relief, I grant. But after that would come reflection. I have made Bromley my enemy, you would say. He knows a secret on the preservation of which my peace depends. I have provoked him to reveal it. How would you then long to call me back! Just now you're like a child who forgets her tooth-ache in her fright at the dentist; but who, when the tortured nerve again vibrates, would give worlds that she had borne the operation.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] True; I am in his power. [*Aloud.*] Have you no sense of right? You know what you call my secret is your invented slander.

Brom. Excuse me; we've discussed that point so often.

Mrs Lor. And, even were it true, hav'n't I paid for your silence—paid your own price? You promised to extort no more.

Brom. That's a sound argument, I admit; very sound,

so far as it goes. But I'm in need, and I must live. You can't argue against a law of nature.

Mrs Lor. [*With vehemence.*] And what proof have I that if I let you rob me once more, it will be for the last time? In a year or two you will come again, with the same threats, for the same purpose; and so I shall never, never, get rid of this terror.

Enter HESTER in walking dress.

Mrs Lor. O Hester—Hester, darling, I am so wretched. [*Throws herself on HESTER'S neck.*

Hes. What does this mean, mamma?—Can you, sir, account for it? [*Lays aside her hat and mantle.*

Mrs Lor. I can bear it no longer! Hester, I must break the truth to you or it will kill me!

Brom. Perhaps I'd better withdraw?

Mrs Lor. Do as you like, man; she shall know everything.

Brom. With your leave, then, I'll remain. I must defend myself if attacked.

Hes. [*Leading MRS LORRINGTON to chair.*] Sit down, dear mother; calm yourself. [*Kneels by her side.*

Mrs Lor. O Hester! if you should despise me!

Hes. Despise you! I'm your child. What is this trouble?

Mrs Lor. Well, then, I daresay you've often thought, from my manners and conversation, that I was born in an elevated position. Hester, that wasn't exactly the case. My father was—was—well, he was a hairdresser in Shrewsbury. I was early left an orphan; and then his brother, my Uncle Robert, took charge of me. Uncle Robert was an innkeeper in North Wales. I don't mean a common inn, Hester; it was unquestionably an hotel. Thou'rt not ashamed of me.

Hes. Mother!

Brom. Excellent young person!

Mrs Lor. My Uncle, who was well to do, sent me to a boarding-school, where I acquired all sorts of accomplish-

ments. At seventeen, I came back to live with him. But don't fancy, Hester, that I ever lowered myself to serve at the bar; I never did.

Brom. Perfectly accurate, so far.

Mrs Lor. [*To BROMLEY.*] Who asked for your opinion? [*To HESTER.*] Still I would sometimes chat with the tourists who put up at the house. One of these was your father, Hester, who died ere you could remember him. Fortune had made me an innkeeper's niece, but nature had designed me for a lady. I was thought a beauty; and, though I say it myself, there was a something of high-life about me even then. The stranger saw it; he fell wildly in love with me. At last he offered marriage. But he was the son of a rich and very proud man, and, for fear of his father's anger, made me vow secrecy. We went to Scotland where we were married in private by an English clergyman, a friend of your father's. That person [*Pointing to BROMLEY*], who feigned to be also his friend, was the witness.

Brom. I must reluctantly object to that. The so-called marriage was a farce. [*They rise.*]

Mrs Lor. He lies—basely—knowingly!

Hes. Stop! [*To BROMLEY.*] If there was no marriage how came my mother to inherit her fortune?

Brom. For the simple reason that your father left it to her—in her maiden name.

Mrs Lor. Yes; because, jealous of his secret, fearful lest his marriage should transpire, he concealed it even from his lawyer.

Brom. An ingenious theory.

Mrs Lor. We were in France when my husband was seized with his last illness. During that illness his father suddenly died.

Brom. [*To HESTER.*] Leaving him the whole of his fortune, which afterwards, still under her maiden name, your mother took. But the news never reached your father. He died ere it arrived.

Hes. My father died, his marriage still unacknowledged?

Mrs Lor. Too true—too true !

Hes. But the clergyman who married you ?

Mrs Lor. Was sought for everywhere—advertised for ; but in vain.

Hes. And you have no proof of your marriage ?

Mrs Lor. Alas, none but what this man could furnish.

Brom. But I deny the marriage.

Mrs Lor. Yes ; that you may still extort your price.

Brom. A mere victim of circumstance, Miss Lorrington. As I've often told your mother, I'm generous by nature—mercenary by compulsion.

Hes. But your sense of honour——

Brom. Is a strong motive I allow—a very strong motive. But then, I must live. That you see is a stronger motive. Am I understood ?

Hes. [*With intense contempt.*] Yes ; you are understood. Leave us.

Brom. Certainly, since you wish it. I never occasion unnecessary pain. [*Goes out by window.*]

Hes. [*Putting her arm round MRS LORRINGTON and leading her forward.*] Mother, dear mother, what must you have suffered !

Mrs Lor. Torture, Hester, torture for which there is no cure.

Hes. You are unfit to cope with this man. Tell everything to one of his own sex who will know how to meet him—to Annerly !

Mrs Lor. Are you mad ? Do you think I would trust such a secret to him—own that I have no proof of my marriage—be suspected of dishonour ? It would kill me, Hester !

Hes. But Annerly would——

Mrs Lor. Foolish girl ! His first act would be to break off the match.

Hes. You little know him.

Mrs Lor. Do you think he would marry you with even a suspicion of taint on your birth ?

Hes. Then how could I marry him with honour, if I concealed it?

Mrs Lor. You must conceal it.

Hes. Then I can never marry him. It would be treachery to do so.

Mrs Lor. Folly, folly! Money will always ensure Bromley's silence. Who then will know the secret?

Hes. I shall.

Mrs Lor. Hester, mark me. If you breathe this matter to Annerly, or to any one, we shall be shamed for ever. Promise that you will not.

Hes. [*Dismayed.*] Promise that?

Mrs Lor. [*Vehemently.*] I tell you that all I live for—nay, life itself—is in your hands! Promise!

Hes. I promise, then, till you release me.

Mrs Lor. I shall never release you. Not a word even to Lucy!

Hes. Not to Lucy!

Mrs Lor. On no account.

Tom. [*Without.*] I told you so;—I told you so!

Mrs Lor. Hush! Some one comes! I'm faint, I can see no one. Help me to my room; then return and make what excuses for me you can. Your promise, mind; your promise!

Hes. [*Sadly.*] I have given it; I have given it!

[*They go out by door, HESTER supporting MRS LORRINGTON.*]

Enter ANNERLY and TOM by window.

Ann. Yes; you were right. She returned by the road, so I missed her.

Tom. Well; see her now. A little pluck, old fellow; state the case and get it over.

Ann. That's very easily said, Tom.

Tom. Why I thought you were all confidence.

Ann. So I am. Still, when a man's whole fortune turns on a word, it's nervous work.

Tom. Nonsense ; she'll prize you all the more for your misfortunes.

Ann. Why, Tom, you're talking sentiment.

Tom. Well I rather like sentiment—in a woman.

Ann. What's the cause of this change ?

Tom. What's the cause of a west wind ? I don't ask. I'm content that it's warmer. [*Looking off to open door.*] By Jove, she's coming ! [*Both withdraw to back.*] I must leave you. A bold heart now. [*Aside.*] Here she comes to put him out of his pain. What a charming sister-in-law that girl would make to some lucky fellow !

[*He and ANNERLY stand by window at back. HESTER enters, lost in thought, not perceiving them, and advances to front. TOM and ANNERLY converse apart.*

Hes. [*In a low voice to herself.*] In what a strait am I placed, loving Annerly as I do, even more than I dreamed till now ; yet obliged for my mother's sake to hide from him the truth ! Can I wonder that she shrinks from its disclosure ? Yet, to marry him in silence, while a stigma, however unjust, may fall upon her—upon myself—while at any moment I may be pointed at as the offspring of shame ! It would be base. I cannot !

[*TOM sportively pushes ANNERLY into centre of stage and hastens out by window.*

Ann. [*Advancing.*] Hester !

Hes. [*Startled, and sinking on sofa.*] You Frank—you ?
[*She averts her head.*

Ann. [*Aside.*] She turns from me. Has she heard the truth already ? Hester, I must beg your earnest attention.

Hes. You speak gravely. Go on, Frank.

Ann. [*Aside*] Still "Frank !" I have wronged her. [*Aloud.*] I have news for you, that is if you have not already heard it, rather serious news.

Hes. Serious to you ?

Ann. Serious, no doubt ; but its effect depends—well,

it does not depend upon myself. I have suddenly met with heavy reverses.

Hes. [*Reaching her hand to him with great tenderness.*] Heavy reverses, Frank?

Ann. [*Aside.*] I was base to doubt her. [*Aloud.*] To tell a disastrous tale briefly, events have transpired by which I suddenly lose the bulk of my property. [*Sitting by her side.*] I can no longer offer you wealth, or a brilliant position. My means are still equal to the modest needs of life; to nothing more.

Hes. And what more could we require?

[*She suddenly recollects herself.*]

Ann. [*With rapture.*] "We" require! You say "we!" Then, generous as you are, you will still share my lot?

Hes. [*Aside.*] For a moment I had forgotten all!—O Frank, say that this is not true—say that I have misunderstood you.

Ann. As to what, Hester?

Hes. As to the loss you spoke of, the change in your prospects.

Ann. I have told you the plain facts.

Hes. Then, my fate is indeed hard.

Ann. Why? Because you shrink from those facts?

Hes. No, Annerly, no! It is because your misfortunes are a new, a sacred claim upon my sympathy; because I yearn in vain to show that sympathy—to taste the dearest bliss I could know, the bliss of saying—Not for what fortune could give or take, for himself I chose this man. Rich with him in the meanest state, poor without him in the proudest, my life is his!—It is because my heart is stifled, and I cannot say this; but must seem basely to detest you!

[*She bursts into tears.*]

Ann. [*Taking her hand tenderly.*] Hester, what mystery is this? If you love me, as your emotion shows, why this language?

Hes. Have pity on me—trust me.

Ann. When I lose that trust, I lose my future. Be frank with me. I have told you of my changed position.

I am bound, if you wish it, to release you from your engagement. Do you wish it?

Hes. Wish it!

Ann. Then, you are still mine?

Hes. No; there is a barrier.

Ann. What barrier? You are under some delusion. [*HESTER makes signs of dissent.*] Then, explain this barrier. Give me one valid reason which should sever a loving woman from the man who has staked his all upon her, and I will accept my fate. [*A pause.*] Well?

Hes. [*Aside.*] What must I seem to him?—O Frank, still trust me! I am bound to silence, but the secret is not mine.

Ann. Whose then?

Hes. [*After a struggle.*] I cannot explain.

Ann. Not explain! Surely, so much is due to me?

Hes. My lips are sealed.

Ann. To me? Think once more. If I, a poor man, humble myself to plead to you, it is because, in my love, I forget the distinctions of fortune. Hester, I speak to you, not as I often speak; not as I should choose another to hear me. We, men of society, in these days when the smooth outside of manner, hard as it is polished, masks our emotions—we have emotions still. Before you send me hence, listen to my story. Ere I knew you, I once fancied that I loved. It was the impulse of a lad, rash and transient, perhaps; but it had a lad's unselfishness and romance. I was encouraged, lured on, while my prospects were bright; but—the old story—when fortune seemed to change, I was at once deserted. What I had deemed love for love proved to be calculation trading on credulity. Can you wonder that, embittered at the very outset of life, I grew a cynic, distrusted all, and hid a rankling wound beneath a laugh or a sneer? Such was I when I met you. Unlike others, good as you were fair, noble though severe, you dealt with me honestly. I seemed to live in a new air, to drink in at once brightness and purity. I grew to believe in you—jealously, I grant, for

I had learned to suspect ; but I did believe, I hoped again, I loved ! Joy sprang up afresh ; you gave me back my youth. Now, Hester, see what hangs upon your reply. Be frank with me and explain. You may doom me to lose you ; but you may also show me that your motives are just. Explain, then, I implore you ! [*Taking both her hands.*] Whatever you take from me, darling, leave me faith in yourself. If you take from me all else, let me still say—This woman, whom I so loved, was worthy of my love. I bless her though she may never be mine ! [*Turns from her in emotion.*]

Hes. [*Imploringly.*] Annerly !

Ann. Speak then. There may be reasons to sever even a betrothed wife from her husband ; but he has a right to know them.

Hes. He has—he has—but——

Ann. But, what ?

Hes. Judge me as you will ; I cannot speak.

Ann. You forsake me then [*Rising*], at the very moment when fortune forsakes me ? You deny the connection between these facts ; but you will not say a word to disprove it ?

Hes. Because I ought not.

Ann. Ought not ! What secret can you have from the man whose life you should have shared ?

Hes. O Frank ! what is love that cannot trust in spite of appearances ?

Ann. And what is love that can clear itself by a word, and will not ? I do not reproach you, Miss Lorrington ; I blame only my own folly that created and believed in a dream.

Hes. And you think me heartless ?

Ann. No ; let me be just. That it gives you pain to cast me off I believe. That you would have indulged the preference that honoured me, if you could have done so wisely,—I believe that too. Doubtless, you had already heard of my changed prospects. Your sense of what the world calls prudence ; the counsels of a mother, perhaps—

[HESTER starts.] Ah, it is so!—These have weighed with you. Mind, I do not say there has been no struggle. It costs the seaman a struggle when, to save his ship, he casts its freight into the sea. Not without a pang you made your sacrifice—gave up the pleasant hopes, the tender dreams of a quiet, reasonable love—a circumspect love, love with its eyes open! Yes, it was a sacrifice; but prudence compelled it. [*With a light, forced laugh.*] Forgive me, Miss Lorrington, I talk strangely, but I am a mere unit; the world—the world is on your side. Good morning!

[*He goes out.* HESTER stands arrested and overcome by emotion, and utters a faint cry.

ACT IV.

SCENE.—*Another apartment in MRS LORRINGTON'S villa communicating through open window with grounds at back. Night; moonlight.*

Mrs With. [*Who is discovered, seated.*] This is certainly a strange house for mysteries and changes. I'm now confident that our hostess is someway mixed up with that story of Betsy Parlett. I've again probed her once or twice upon the subject, and never was woman more confused. Then, with respect to Annerly, he makes no secret of the loss of his fortune; and, if I read his bitter manner and Hester's downcast looks aright, her mother has forced her to give him up. If so, she has acted prudently. But the Major assures me that Annerly has still left a snug little income of six or seven hundred a year. Now, what an heiress would despise might still be a decent provision for a poor girl whose mother has only a life-annuity. Oh, if my Effy were not so dreadfully foolish and shy!

Enter EUPHEMIA by door.

Oh, here you are, Effy! I was just thinking of you.
Euph. Indeed, mamma.

Mrs With. Yes ; sit down. Of course, you've heard of poor Mr Annerly's sudden reverses.

Euph. Yes, mamma.

Mrs With. Well, I think it behoves us all to treat him with additional respect and kindness.

Euph. Oh yes ! I'm sure, since I heard he was to be married ; and, especially, since I heard of his misfortunes, my heart has quite opened to him.

Mrs With. Good girl ! And do you show your sympathy.

Euph. Well, now and then ; when I meet him in the grounds, I force myself to speak to him in a kind tone, you know, as if I was interested.

Mrs With. Very right. And does he observe it ?

Euph. I think so. He said, just now, he quite esteemed me ; I was one of the few who never flattered him.

Mrs With. He said that ?

Euph. Oh yes ! And he pressed my hand quite warmly.

Mrs With. Did he, poor fellow ? Well, he's greatly to be pitied ; for, between ourselves, Effy, I suspect that Hester Lorrington will not marry him after all.

Euph. Not marry him.

Mrs With. No ; therefore he needs all our kindness. You must not be timid or reserved with him. It would seem cold. For instance, if he were to come into the room now, and any little circumstance were to call me away, you must not follow me, but stay and converse with him.

Euph. O mamma ! I couldn't be left alone with him !

Mrs With. Why not, simpleton ?

Euph. Because—because—I should be so fearfully nervous. [*Aside.*] Oh, I'm sure she has some new scheme in her head !

Mrs With. What ! Would you wound his feelings by running away from him ?

Euph. No ; but I really couldn't stay. [*Aside.*] I know there's a plot ! [*Rising and moving towards door.*]

Mrs With. Effy, shyness and ill breeding at your age are unpardonable. Mind, I insist that if I leave you with Mr Annerly, you pay him the proper respect of remaining.

Enter ANNERLY.

Ann. Well, Mrs Witherby, I've just come to tell you—on my word I was going to be cruelly abrupt.

Mrs With. La, Annerly, what has happened?

Ann. What is about to happen I must break to you gently. Summon all your fortitude. [*Sits.*] You are about to lose the most wicked, witty, incorrigible, and delightful person of your acquaintance.

Mrs With. Oh, you vain creature! But are we really to lose you?

Ann. In sober earnest. Are you sorry?

Mrs With. Why should you doubt it?

Ann. Because I'm unfortunate, and misfortune repels.

Mrs With. Don't be bitter, now. You must really take the world as you find it. Fortunate men are, as a rule, so much better tempered, so much more cheerful and agreeable than others, that it's no wonder they're better liked. I ought to know; for, alas, I married a poor man myself, and I soon found that trouble could spoil the very best disposition. Therefore, I have always said to my daughter here—Effy, if you would marry an amiable man, marry a rich one.

Euph. [*Nervously, aside.*] What can be her design?

Ann. And she approves the advice?

Mrs With. Ah, that's a sore point. [*To EUPHEMIA.*] Isn't it, darling! I should not wonder now if she were to disobey me; for there's so much romance in her imprudent little heart, that, positively, I believe she prefers people for their misfortunes. [*Sweetly, aloud to EUPHEMIA.*] Now, confess it, simpleton.

EUPH. [*Aside, alarmed.*] Oh, I see it now!

Mrs With. [*To ANNERLY.*] However, in spite of all, you're a favourite with me. You must think of us some-

times when we're parted ; and, to help your memory, I'll just run and fetch you my *carte de visite*.

Ann. You're truly kind.

Mrs With. I shall expect your own, you know.

Euph. Mamma, I'll fetch the *carte*.

Mrs With. No darling, they're locked up. [*Apart to her, sternly.*] Remember, now. [*Goes out by door.*]

Euph. [*Aside, agitated.*] She has some understanding with him I know ; she wants him to propose to me.

[*She leans over a chair with her back to the audience*

Ann. What's the matter with that young lady, I wonder.—Well, Miss Effy, here we are *tête-à-tête*.

Euph. [*Turning and supporting herself by table.*] O Mr Annerly ! it wasn't my wish.

Ann. What was not ?

Euph. Oh, nothing—nothing in the world ! I spoke at random—I mean—Oh, dear !

Ann. Not, I hope, that you don't wish to talk to me. I thought we were friends.

Euph. Yes, certainly ; friends, you know—friends. [*Aside.*] Oh dear, Oh dear !

Ann. [*Aside.*] Poor, timid child !—Excellent friends, I trust, dear Miss Witherby ?

Euph. [*Aside.*] Does he mean anything ?

Ann. [*Aside, smiling.*] I didn't catch what she said.—Come, you've given me no answer.

Euph. [*Vaguely.*] Answer !

[*MRS WITHERBY now appears at door and watches them. MAJOR and CAMILLA immediately after appear at window and also stand and observe.*]

Ann. Yes—answer. What, must I prefer my suit again ?

Euph. [*Aside, with great agitation.*] His suit ! [*Aloud.*] I don't know what I'm saying. I'm not well. I feel quite giddy. [*Tottering.*]

Ann. Giddy ! Let me support you.

[*Puts his arm round her.*]

Euph. [*After a short pause, rallying and trying to free*

herself.] No, Mr Annerly, you must not! Indeed, you must not! It's wrong. I can never—never—be more to you than a friend.

Ann. [Leading her forward and speaking in a low, soothing tone.] My dear young lady, I never meant to ask you to be more.

Euph. And you never will?

Ann. Never; I promise.

Euph. Oh, thank you, thank you!

[Giving him her hand.

Ann. That's right; and thus I seal the bargain.

[Kisses her hand.

[MAJOR and CAMILLA lift up their hands and retire.

MRS WITHERBY, who being nearer has heard the whole dialogue, next disappears with a gesture of annoyance.

Euph. There; I'm better now. I only want a little air. Pray, excuse me.

Ann. Certainly; no ceremony between us. [She goes out by window.] Well, that's the most eccentric young lady I've seen for some time. [Sitting.] Is she indeed as childish and artless as she seems, or is it only a feint? Ah, Hester, what have you made me? I look at a daisy and shrink as if it were hemlock! Hester! Ah, the thought will return; is it possible that I have wronged her? Her looks and tones come back to me. How hard to think them pretence. Can there have been some hidden motive which she was bound to conceal—even from me? [MRS LORRINGTON appears at door, and enters.] Her mother! A word from her might solve everything. Mrs Lorrington?

Mrs Lor. Excuse me, sir, I'm in haste.

Ann. Only one question. Your daughter, you know, has refused me. Is there any reason for this except my changed prospects?

Mrs Lor. I cannot—I really cannot discuss——

Ann. Do be plain. Is there any mystery connected with her, or with yourself, to account for it?

Mrs Lor. [*Aside, much alarmed.*] Mystery ! They all begin to suspect and taunt me. If I confess to a mystery one question will lead to another, and, amongst them, my secret will be discovered. I must admit nothing. [*Aloud.*] This is a painful subject, sir ; but Hester's motives are plain. Of course she broke off the match because—because it would no longer have been prudent.

Ann. Thank you, thank you. I only share the fate of Miss Lorrington's former suitors. One of them (the rich Mr Paul Gresham) was, I believe, a far better match than I. By the way, you told me this morning that he ran me rather hard, and that he had just renewed his proposals to her. Perhaps he may now be more fortunate.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] Ah, it might be safer for him to think so !—Well, if this were the case, Mr Annerly, you would have no right to complain. Mr Gresham is a person of very superior advantages—and—and—[*Aside.*] What am I saying ? [*Aloud.*] Mind, I say nothing. I don't betray my daughter's confidence. Excuse me, I'm seeking her everywhere.

Ann. Thank you ; I'm answered.

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] What have I said ? O Hester, forgive me ! [*Goes out by window.*]

Ann. Yes, I'm answered—not flatteringly ; but, I hope, finally. I'm not only discarded for my losses ; but my wealthy successor seems already fixed on. My random shaft struck home. She all but confessed it.

Enter HESTER by door.

Hes. As I hoped, he is alone.—Annerly !

Ann. Miss Lorrington !

Hes. I would speak with you once more.

Ann. To explain ?

Hes. No ; that is impossible.

Ann. Then, pardon me, why seek this interview ?

Hes. Because I know that your hard thoughts will embitter you as much as they wound me ; because I still thought that when you heard me speak, when you looked

into my face, as you now do, you might feel, notwithstanding all, that the woman who resigned you was a victim, not a criminal, that—*[She stops short, overcome.]*

Ann. *[Aside.]* Heavens, what an actress! But for her mother's avowal, I might still believe her. Ah, 'tis pity!

Hes. *[Who has overheard his last words.]* What is pity?

Ann. Oh, merely that you're dangerous. To see you—to listen to your sentiments—really, it transports a fellow out of this plain, matter-of-fact world, into a sort of golden age—the happy time, you know, of shepherds and shepherdesses, when Damon was always faithful, and Chloe always devoted; when there was no such thing as self-interest, and when love was not a phrase that had survived its meaning. Happy times! Sweet Watteau pictures for old china; but liable to crack in handling! No; it won't do. Give me reality—the harshest reality; but no more illusions!

Hes. You'll be sorry for this, Frank, hereafter.

Ann. Well, perhaps I'm unfair. You're not so very dangerous, after all; for if your words conjure up illusions, your conduct, Miss Lorrington, effectually dispels them.

Hes. Cruel! Cruel! To me who have so loved you!

Ann. Stay; that's what I can't forgive you. I can understand that you don't like me to think ill of you—that, perhaps, you had a passing preference for me; but why call it love? Do I blame you if your mother's counsels and your own prudence bid me stand by? Others would have done the same. Do I blame them, or you, if they let the eligible mansions of their hearts to the highest bidders? Do I blame you, even, because the wealthy Paul Gresham now shows to advantage beside me and steps into my place? No; why should I expect more than others, or you give more? Still, don't call this—"love." That's what I object to. Don't say "love." I

know the thing is obsolete ; but I have a respect for antiquities.

Hes. [Proudly.] You do not deserve a reply. *[Rising and softening.]* Nay, I pardon you. You are cruel because you suffer.

Ann. [Softening to her.] Suffer ! Yes, Hester, I do suffer. Ah, had you been true, I could have defied fortune. Life's very trials would have been sweet had they brought me your sympathy. But, to lose my trust in you—to learn that the creed of the worldly—the creed of your embalmed dowagers and fossilised old men, who have forgotten their own youth, and would crush out that of their children, was your creed also—that there is no motive but interest, no good but gold, that amiability is but manner—the enamel over the wrinkles of self—the heart a mere machine to propel the blood—pshaw, pshaw. I get poetical ! Why do I rail ? I accept the creed. You have converted me.

Hes. Annerly, this bitterness will pass.

Ann. Yes, yes ; I suppose we shall both change. A time will come when you will smile even at your own remorse ; and as for me—*[With affected levity.]*—Oh, I shall struggle through. A year or two, and I shall grow wise, like the rest, laugh at love as an epidemic of youth, find myself shrewd, lively, and heart-whole, without even a scar to show where there was once a wound.

Hes. Farewell.

[Moves towards door.]

Ann. Nay, not in anger.

[Offers his hand, which she does not take.]

Hes. No ; in grief that shuts out anger. I can only say that a time may come when you will believe me—believe that I loved you as a woman can only once love. Annerly, I asked not whether my path of life lay through brightness or through gloom. Enough that it was yours. And when I was forced to turn back and take my way alone, I thought I could never know deeper pain. Alas, now, when you can mock at my grief, when I hear the tones of the scoffer from your lips, I feel there may be a

pang still keener—that it would be worse to lose my honour and esteem for you, than even to lose yourself.

[Hurries out by door.]

Ann. What am I to think? She talks as if she, not I, were the injured person, and truth itself might speak with such a tone. Yet, do I not know her worldly? Has not her mother avowed it? I'm bewildered. Now, I could throw myself at her feet for pardon; then, comes in reason and cries—Stay, dupe! On my life, I feel a wretch when I harden to her, and a fool when I relent. Still, facts are facts. She may regret—she may even pity me; but not the less she deserts me. Yes, let me keep to facts; they are indeed stubborn.

Enter LUCY and TOM.

Lucy. No, Mr Sutherland; I'll not be patient; I can't stand on ceremony. I can get no explanation from Hester. But she's my sister, and for her sake I will have the truth.—Mr Annerly!

Ann. Madam?

Lucy. I demand an explanation. Why has my sister, twice to-day, left you almost heart-broken?

Ann. Oh, she's going to lecture me now! By Jove, I begin to feel very black.

Lucy. Will you answer my question?

Ann. Well, that's rather difficult. Why a lady should first reject her suitor, and then weep for his loss, is one of the inscrutable enigmas of her sex.

Tom. Reject you! Why, there's some strange mystery here.

Ann. Mystery, once more! No; a very simple case of cause and effect. It's the child's toy-barometer over again. In bad weather the man turns out and the woman goes in. Enter Misfortune; exit Fidelity.

Lucy. Do you mean that Hester deserted you for your misfortunes?

Ann. I certainly am under that impression.

Lucy. Then you should be ashamed to confess it !

Tom. On my word, Frank, you should.

Ann. [*To Lucy.*] What ! Though your mother confirms it ?

Lucy. Oh, that's impossible !

Ann. Indeed.

Lucy. Did Hester admit it ?

Ann. No ; she didn't admit it ; but——

Lucy. [*Triumphantly.*] Of course, not !

Tom. Frank, you've behaved atrociously.

Ann. Are you mad, Tom ? Is a man to believe in a woman's affections because she casts him off, and to have faith in her reasons because she declines to give them ?

Lucy. There must have been gross misconduct on your part ; or why did she give you up ?

Ann. On my life, this is pleasant. A poor wretch is first deserted by his betrothed, and then charged with cruelty because she won't have him !

Lucy. Evasion, sir ! You impute unkindness to Hester to excuse your own. Though she won't confess it, you've used her shamefully—shocked her feelings cruelly. This morning I surprised her weeping ; and, now again, I find her in tears. Poor darling, you never deserved her ! Oh, I can't bear the sight of him !

[Stamps her foot and weeps.]

Tom. [*To ANNERLY.*] There ; see what you have done !

Ann. Well, the proficiency of these sisters in spontaneous hydraulics is, to say the least, remarkable.

Tom. Come, old fellow, I know your suspicious nature. You've thoughtlessly wounded her. Go at once and ask her pardon. It may not be too late.

Ann. Ask her pardon because she has thrown me over ! Here's justice ! You might as reasonably order a man to be executed, because somebody else has attempted his life.

Enter MRS WITHERBY, EUPHEMIA, MAJOR, and
CAMILLA, *by window.*

Mrs With. [*Indignantly, apart to EUPHEMIA.*] What !
He took such liberties with you, placed his arm round
your waist ; yet declared he had no intention of pro-
posing ?

Euph. Yes, mamma, yes ; but——

Mrs With. Enough, enough ! [*Advancing.*] Mr
Annerly, I'm grieved and astonished.

Ann. You look so, madam. What has happened,
pray ?

Mrs With. It's a painful topic ; but your improprieties
have been glaring ?

Ann. Have they indeed ? It's very likely ; I can
believe anything.

Mrs With. From delicacy, sir, I might have kept
silence ; but others—[*indicating* MAJOR and CAMILLA]—
others have witnessed your conduct to my daughter, and
I am bound, as a mother, to protest.

Ann. My conduct !

Euph. O mamma !——

Major. It is no wonder, sir, that a mother shrinks from
naming it ; but I, who saw this innocent girl struggle in
your enforced embraces—I can speak.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] His embraces ! Here's a light on his
conduct to Hester ! [*Aloud to ANNERLY*] Perfidious
man !

Major. We are indeed fallen upon strange times. [*To*
CAMILLA.] In the Regent's days, my dear——

Cam. No gentleman, then, uncle, would have offered
such freedoms to a lady.

Major. Certainly not ; except with the most delicate
precautions against witnesses.

Ann. For you, sir, I have no answer. [*To* MRS
WITHERBY.] To you, madam, I will say that my atten-
tions to your daughter were only such as my good feel-
ing compelled.

Mrs With. She shall not trespass on it again.

Euph. May I speak?

Mrs With. [*Apart to her.*] Hold your tongue.

Major. My dear Miss Lucy, I'm truly sorry that this has occurred. [*Bows and retires.*]

Cam. And, believe me, dear, I feel for your poor, injured sister. [*Retires.*]

Mrs With. [*Forcing EUPHEMIA off.*] Come, darling, you're safe under a mother's protection.

[*MRS WITHERBY, EUPHEMIA, MAJOR, and CAMILLA, go out by door.*]

Tom. Well, Frank?

Lucy. Now, sir?

Ann. [*Greatly excited.*] Now, don't ask me for an explanation, I'll give none.

Tom. None?

Ann. None; except a denial. Fate's against me, and the world is topsy-turvy. As I live, I don't know whether I've lost my reason, or whether I'm the wretch you would make me out. First, my betrothed wife gives me up, and then bursts into tears because I'm hard-hearted. I ask in vain for her reasons, and next find that I'm expected to trust her because she's about to marry somebody else. Her mother all but admits this, and tells me that I'm discarded for my losses. When I mention these facts to the sister, she contradicts me, reproaches me, and she too bursts into tears. Then my best friend urges me to beg pardon of a lady because she has abandoned me; and, in the midst of this sails in an infuriated dame who reviles me because I showed common humanity to her daughter. I embraced her, did I? Poor piece of still life, I would as soon embrace a wax lady at Madame Tussaud's. The matter will end, I suppose, by the Major calling me out for an act of kindness, and by my excellent friend here acting as his second. Be it so! Be it so! I think I should like it!

Tom. Now, will you be reasonable?

Ann. No; for then I should be unlike everybody else.

No more of this farce. I've preparations to make, and must go. I've learned the worth of love already, Tom; I shall now, it seems, learn that of friendship also.

[*Bows sarcastically, and rushes out by door.*]

Tom. Poor fellow! But I hope all will be well yet.

Lucy. No; he has wounded Hester too deeply. Then his conduct to Effy!

Tom. Oh, there must be a mistake as to that. The poor girl would have explained, had she been allowed. No; the mischief comes from some other direction. What was it he said about your mother?

Lucy. That she confessed Hester had given him up for his losses. But mamma couldn't have said that.

Tom. I'm not sure of it. My opinion still is that there's a mystery, and that Mr Fox Bromley is at the bottom of it.

Lucy. How is it possible?

Tom. That is to be found out. It's quite clear that all this trouble has happened since he came, and that he has some strange power over your mother. Have you no clue to it?

Lucy. None. She will not permit a question about him. Once, when a child, I was found, screened by a bush, listening to their conversation. You should have seen mamma's anger.

Tom. But, what did you hear?

Lucy. Oh, I remember nothing but a name—a name often repeated; and that I only recollect because I was told never to mention it.

Tom. What name?

Lucy. How curious you are. The name was Wintersea.

Tom. [*Surprised.*] Wintersea! What was his Christian name?

Lucy. George, I think. What of that?

Tom. George! George Wintersea! I fancy I know the man.

Lucy. Indeed!

Tom. [*Musing.*] Wintersea concerned in it! Your mother's excitement at the story of Betsy Parlett! Then her forced politeness to Bromley whom she plainly detests! Depend on it, Bromley is the cause of all.

Lucy. Of the quarrel between Hester and Annerly?

Tom. Yes.

Lucy. If you could prove that!

Tom. Nay; I've no proof. I only suspect. Still, a shrewd fellow might put this and that together. Oh, if I could but foil him!

Lucy. Oh, if you could, I would——

Tom. Go on; what would you do?

Lucy. Well, as a reward, I would beg your uncle's pardon for you, when he hears you have given me up.

Tom. Stay; you never put that fact correctly. It was you who gave me up.

Lucy. It's the same thing.

Tom. By no means. If I give you up, I incur all the penalties my uncle threatened. But if you give me up, I'm blameless and get off.

Lucy. But you tried to repel me. That was really giving me up.

Tom. Take care. If you view the matter in that light, in self-defence I must propose again.

Lucy. And do you take care. Shrewd as you are, I'm your match. Provoke me, and you'll repent it. Now, mark; if you venture to propose again, I'll positively accept you.

Tom. Eh! You have not the courage.

Lucy. Try me.

Tom. Well, I will. Miss Lucy Lorrington, I offer you my hand.

Lucy. Mr Thomas Sutherland, I accept your obliging offer.

[*Takes his hand.*]

Tom. Seriously?

Lucy. Seriously. How do you feel now?

Tom. Well, I feel as if I could bear it. No more disguises, Lucy. In dropping the ugliest of masks, you

have revealed the loveliest of faces. My mask is dropped, too. Ah, if in the rough face beneath you could find——

Lucy. Tom, I find there the kindness and spirit which, when combined, make manhood.

Tom. Say you so? [*Seizing her hand and kissing it.*]

Lucy. Ensure but Hester's happiness, and mine is complete.

Tom. Ah, but how am I to do that? No matter; I'll try. I enlist as your soldier.

Lucy. A brave one, I'm sure.

Tom. [*Drawing her to him.*] Yes; I hope so. But, Sergeant Lucy!

Lucy. Well, Private Sutherland?

Tom. You've forgotten the shilling.

Lucy. Oh, you mercenary recruit! No—no! You must give me credit.

Tom. Not a moment's. It's always paid on enlisting. [*Kisses her.*] Now, I feel loyal; now, for the campaign! First, let us find Annerly, for they must meet again. By the way, Sergeant Lucy, are you quite sure that shilling was good? I should really like another.

[*Attempting to kiss her.*]

Lucy. No; not while you doubt the worth of the first, sir. Not yet—not yet! [*They go out by door.*]

Enter by door of upper room FOX BROMLEY; a legal document in his hand.

Brom. [*Sitting and referring to document.*] So, here is the deed which secures me five hundred a year in place of the paltry two hundred I have hitherto received. Now, why should not this little business be settled pleasantly, as between friends? Yet, I fear there will be another scene—more outcries against my avarice and cruelty. Cruelty, indeed, when heaven knows I can't bear to set foot upon a snail! Ah, why wasn't I born to boundless wealth? What delight I should have felt in making everybody happy. Or, why wasn't I born with the talents and industry that earn money? On my life,

I can't say. Why doesn't the sand bring forth grass like the meadow? Why does a cat lie blinking on a cushion and a dog hunt in the field? Nature, nature. We are as we are made—creatures of circumstance. But, alas, nobody reasons; nobody is a philosopher.

Enter MRS LORRINGTON *and* HESTER.

Mrs Lor. Now, sir, for a few minutes we shall be alone. I submit to your extortion. Where is the deed?

Brom. All is prepared, dear madam. If you will retire with me to your library, your signature before two witnesses and a cheque for the first year in advance will conclude the matter.

Hes. Wait; I have a few words to say.

Brom. [*Aside.*] Ah, its coming. I shall again have to look like a monster.

Hes. I do not speak to deny you the money you would wring from us; but I demand one condition.

Brom. Which I shall be delighted to grant, if I can.

Hes. Then lift from my mother the weight which bows her down. You were the witness to her marriage. Admit the fact; give her the written proof of it.

Brom. [*Aside.*] What, part with my power over her? Why that's all my capital in life!—My dear Miss Lorrington, you are deceived. There was no marriage.

Mrs Lor. [*To* HESTER.] I told you he would be relentless.

Hes. [*To* BROMLEY.] If you have a spark of human feeling, how can you torture a woman with the thought of undeserved shame? On that woman's bounty you live, I, too, share her misery; the same terror preys on me—makes me seem false when I am most true—robs me of love and hope—destroys my whole future. Can you persist? Have you neither respect for her years, nor pity for my youth?

Brom. Be reasonable. Suppose, even, that what you wrongly conjecture were true—suppose that I could prove your mother's marriage. Has she not already paid me

large sums simply because I denied it? What would follow were I now to admit it? Why, I should have taken money under false pretences; I should be within range of the Criminal Court. The fact is simply this; you and I have opposite interests. Like shipwrecked people we are both struggling to keep afloat. I clutch at a plank, and you ask for it. I would willingly accommodate you; but, if I did so, I should sink!

Mrs Lor. No more, Hester. Anything to purchase his absence.

Enter TOM, ANNERLY, and LUCY.

Mrs Lor. [*Apart to HESTER.*] Be on your guard.

Tom. I hope we are not interrupting. Annerly is come just to take leave.

Ann. Yes, madam; the carriage is at the door. Accept my good wishes. [*Offers his hand to MRS LORRINGTON.*]

Mrs Lor. [*Aside.*] Poor, dear Hester!—[*Shaking hands with ANNERLY in great agitation.*] I'm sure you have mine.

Ann. Adieu, then, Miss Lorrington.

[*Shaking hands with her.*]

Hes. And you go?

Ann. Go! Why not? Miss Lorrington, our little tragedy is over; the plot is ended, the parts are played. What remains but the exit? Good-bye. [*He goes out.*]

Tom. Annerly! Why, he's gone!

Hes. [*Aside.*] Gone!

Mrs Lor. [*To TOM.*] Yes; of course he is.

Tom. [*Going to window.*] No; his people are still struggling with two big trunks. Now, do you think this right?

Mrs Lor. What, right?

Tom. Why, that he should go under a fatal mistake—go believing her false and unfeeling?

Mrs Lor. Mr Sutherland, you take unpardonable liberties.

Tom. Liberties, my dear lady ! There are times when we can't stick at trifles. If I saw your dress on fire, I should take the liberty of half-smothering you with a hearth-rug.—There goes in his fishing-rod ! I say that Hester loves Frank and grieves to give him up. I believe you to be a good mother, and that you wouldn't force her to it. And yet, they part ! Why ? Because there's some hidden motive.

Mrs Lor. Hidden motive !

Tom. Yes ; and I suspect it's connected with that gentleman. *[Points to BROMLEY.]*

Brom. *[Smiling.]* Connected with me ?

Mrs Lor. *[Alarmed.]* With Mr Bromley ? Ridiculous ! Speak, Hester, speak for me ! Deny it !

Hes. *[With a great effort at self-control.]* You're mistaken, Mr Sutherland. There is—there is no such—

[Stops short.]

Tom. *[Looking from window.]* In goes his railway-rug ! He's about to step in ! Speak, or you're too late !

Mrs Lor. *[Looking in great emotion at HESTER who stands fixed in grief.]* Hester, Hester, my own child ; don't look in that way ! *[To TOM.]* Call him back !

Hes. No, mother,—no !

Tom. I must obey your mother. Annerly ! Annerly ! Come back. *[Goes out by window.]*

Hes. Not for my sake, mother !

Mrs Lor. Yes ; I'll confess all. I've been a coward and betrayed you.

Hes. Mother ! *[Re-enter TOM and ANNERLY.]*

Mrs Lor. Yes, darling, I have ; but the mother's heart speaks at last !

Brom. *[Aside.]* Why, it's all beginning again !

Mrs Lor. Mr Annerly !

Ann. Madam !

Mrs Lor. Strange as it may seem to you, I'm not really a person of distinction. I'm a woman of what's called low origin... Worse than this, though I was lawfully but

privately married, I cannot prove it. Hester never knew this till to-day. She refused you rather than consent to a marriage that might have disgraced you. She could not tell you her motive, for she wished to spare her mother. Now her mother avows everything. Hester darling! [*Embracing her.*] He may give you up if he likes; but he must at least respect you.

Ann. Respect her! Noble, self-devoted Hester! Can you forgive me?

Hes. Can I? How fully!

Ann. Then, I may still claim you?

Hes. No, Annerly, no. I cannot profit by a love you might repent of.

Ann. Hester!

Mrs Lor. Do not heed her. As I live I was a wedded wife. There stands my witness. [*Pointing to BROMLEY.*

Ann. What more do you require?

Mrs Lor. Everything. For his own purposes he denies it.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Now is Tom Sutherland a shrewd fellow or not?

Mrs Lor. [*Pointing to table.*] There lies a deed by which he would again extort the reward of his falsehood.

Ann. [*Approaching BROMLEY.*] Then, you deny this lady's marriage.

Brom. You are correct; I deny it.

[*Takes deed from table.*

Ann. Will nothing induce you to admit it?

Brom. Be logical. How can I admit what I deny?

Ann. That's unanswerable. Oblige me with that deed.

Brom. Willingly.

[*Gives deed to ANNERLY who glances over it; then tears it to pieces and scatters the fragments.*

Brom. [*Still composed.*] What does this mean?

Ann. That as you can give Mrs Lorrington no value for her money, she declines to be robbed of it.

Brom. But, I still possess her secret.

Ann. Which is worthless to you the moment you disclose it.

Tom. [*Aside.*] By Jove, he's as shrewd as I am.

Brom. Cleverly put, I own. But, suppose now,—mind I only say suppose—suppose I could produce the required proof—the certificate of marriage?

Mrs Lor. Impossible. It was advertised for, but in vain.

Ann. By whom?

Mrs Lor. By Bromley, as my agent.

Ann. Then, depend upon it, he has received the certificate, and concealed the fact.

Tom [*Aside.*] Why, he's a Talleyrand!

Hes. No matter; give him his own terms. Let him but produce the certificate, signed by Mr Wintersea.

Ann. [*Startled.*] Mr Wintersea!—who once lived in Scotland?

Mrs Lor. Yes; the clergyman who married us.

Ann. [*Apart to him.*] Tom!

Tom. [*Apart to him.*] Not yet, old fellow. Give him line.

Ann. [*To BROMLEY.*] Well, that would certainly be a valuable document. Don't be hard, now. What shall we say for it? Five hundred pounds? [*BROMLEY takes up his hat.*] As many thousands? [*BROMLEY shakes his head.*] Twice that sum?

Brom. [*Putting down his hat.*] Well; I'll think of it.

Ann. No, you won't. Base and utterly discomfited rascal that you are, you sha'n't have sixpence! Mrs Lorrington, to-day or to-morrow, Wintersea himself will give you the certificate for nothing.

Tom. Yes. Annerly promised him a living which I hope he'll get. My dear old tutor, Dominie Sampson as I call him! He's Wintersea, you know. He's on his way here to thank his benefactor, and will arrive in a few hours. See, here's his letter! [*Gives it to MRS LORRINGTON; then approaches BROMLEY.*] I say, my worthy speculator, shares in the fraud market look queer. You should have sold out yesterday.

Brom. [*Going to ANNERLY.*] But shall I not——

Ann. Begone, rascal ! [*TOM takes up BROMLEY's hat.*

Brom. Rascal ! Because I obeyed the law of self-preservation ?

Tom [*To BROMLEY.*] Your hat, my philosopher !

[*Gives it.*

Brom. [*To ANNERLY.*] Sir, we are none of us responsible for our instincts.

Ann. Very true ; and I feel a strong one at present.

Tom. [*Presenting BROMLEY with his cane.*] Your cane, sir. It's safer in your hands.

Ann. An instinct to accelerate your departure by muscular activity. It grows on me, sir ! [*Following BROMLEY as he retreats.*] Law of self-preservation you know. Ah, that's wise ; you retire !

Brom. Misunderstood to the last, and a victim of circumstances !

Tom. Here, you'd better take your document. [*Throws after BROMLEY fragments of deed.*] O Mr Bromley ! I'll send you some caterpillars by post.

[*BROMLEY goes out with gestures of protest, by window.*

Ann. [*Returning from window.*] Victim of circumstances ! The flattering portrait of a rascal when he paints his own likeness.—Hester, I have not deserved you ; but I am already pardoned. Your mother's fears are now dispelled. That fact cannot increase my love ; but it may remove your scruples.

Hes. Yes, Frank, they are vanquished. He twice deserves the child who has saved the mother !

[*They embrace.*

Lucy. Well ; I think Tom had some share in that.

Ann. Share ! I owe him everything. And, what's his reward to be ?

Lucy. [*Laughing.*] Ahem !—He shall be best man at your wedding.

Tom. Best man, indeed ! The poor wretch who stands at the banquet of love, behind the chair of his principal, pours out the champagne, and takes back the empty

glass ! No, Lucy ; we'll drink the wine of life on our account. We'll go to church with them and be married together. [*Takes her hand.*]

Lucy. So ; you keep me to my word ?

Mrs Lor. [*With her old affectation.*] What ! Must I be severed, then, from both my children at once ? [*With sudden frankness.*] Pshaw ; how the old trick clings to me ! From this moment, I'll speak the plain truth in plain words. God bless you, girls ! I'm very happy ! [*Embracing them, and taking one in each arm.*]

Enter MRS WITHERBY, EUPHEMIA, MAJOR, and
CAMILLA.

Mrs With. What do I see ? A united family !

Ann. Is the sight agreeable ?

Mrs With. Why, my dear Annerly, you seem to be on the winning side ; and I'm too old a stager to be on the losing one.

Major. The way of the world, you see, Annerly.

Cam. I'm sure we are all rejoiced at this happy result. Are we not, Effy ?

Euph. [*With a sigh of relief.*] Yes ; I've reason to be.

Mrs Lor. And, now, I'm proof against everything ; and I don't care if you discover, in Mrs Lorrington, Betsy Parlett, the niece of the Welsh innkeeper.

Hes. [*Smiling and looking at ANNERLY.*] What a rash confession !

Ann. Nay ; it matters little to the husband of Betsy Parlett's daughter, who, though poor otherwise, in possessing her is still THE FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE.

END OF THE FAVOURITE OF FORTUNE.

PURE GOLD.

A Play.

IN FOUR ACTS.

Pure Gold.

*First performed at the SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE, on Monday
the 9th of November 1863.*

CHARACTERS.

SIR GERARD FANE, Bart., . . .	Mr EDMUND PHELPS.
BRACKENBURY, a poor gentleman, .	Mr T. B. BENNETT.
GILBERT BRACKENBURY, his son, .	Mr DAVID H. JONES.
LANGLEY, a civil engineer, . . .	Mr PERFIT.
FRANK ROCHFORD, an artist, <i>Langley's nephew,</i>	Mr HENRY MARSTON.
LANCIA, a refugee,	Mr W. D. GRESHAM.
RINALDO, {	Mr E. H. BROOKE.
DE L'EPINE, } <i>political emissaries,</i>	{ Mr HASTINGS.
FRITZ,	Miss ROGERS.
SCHMIDT,	Mr GEORGE VINNING.
1ST OFFICER OF POLICE, . . .	Mr MORTIMER.
2D DITTO,	Mr CLIFTON.
3D DITTO,	Mr A. VIVIAN.
NEUNER, landlord of an hotel at <i>Baden,</i>	Mr ROBINSON.
MORLEY, a London merchant, .	Mr A. BAILDON.
JACKSON, a lodge keeper, . . .	Mr A. DENIAL.

Waiters, Attendants, &c. &c.

MRS ROCHFORD, <i>Rockford's wife,</i> .	Miss MANDLEBERT.
MISS FORTESCUE, her friend, an <i>heiress,</i>	Mrs B. WHITE.
EVELYN ROCHFORD,	Miss MARRIOTT.

*The Scene lies in the 1st act at Baden Baden ; in following acts at
Miss Fortescue's house, near Dover.*

Time, 1st act, 1844.

*An interval of about fifteen years is supposed to elapse between the
first and second acts.*

PURE GOLD.

ACT I., SCENE I.

Front of the Conversations Haus at Baden Baden. Chairs, tables; VISITORS of both sexes conversing, or reading the Journals.—WAITERS are engaged in serving coffee, ices, &c. &c.; Music, which ceases shortly after the curtain rises, heard from the Conversations Haus.

Enter SIR GERARD FANE [a young exquisite of twenty], smoking, with him Mr BRACKENBURY, about fifty, and slightly rheumatic.

Sir G. And so this is your famous Baden Baden, eh, Mr—Mr Brackenstone?

Brack. Brackenbury, pardon me, Sir Gerard; not Brackenstone. I think I remarked to you yesterday that I belong to the baronial house of Brackenbury, that is, it was baronial some years ago; whose family seat is, or rather was some years ago, Brackenbury Tower in Kent.

Sir G. Oh yes! I remember. [*Aside.*] How this worthy bore sticks to me! What a fossil it is, with its old family notions; as lively as my great grandfather in hair powder, and as fast as his coach and six.

Brack. Yes, Sir Gerard; we lost the Brackenbury title in the Wars of the Roses; and our estates—the tower included—were confiscated at the same time.

Sir G. Well, that is, indeed, some years ago.

Brack. But the Crown can't take away a man's ancestors, sir. We can still say "*Fuimus*."—The Brackenburys belong to the past.

Sir G. [*Aside, yawning.*] I wish that could be said of their present representative.

Brack. And let me say, my young friend, though fortunes have changed with us, we are still a proud race ; for instance, we never demean ourselves by low marriages—the late Mrs Brackenbury, my lamented wife, traced her descent to the noble Irish house of the O’Kilmacows ; my only son, now at school in England, is, according to authentic portraits, a juvenile image of the last Baron Brackenbury, barring his lordship’s red hair ; though, to be sure, the boy has a touch of the O’Kilmacow family about the nose.

Sir G. Indeed ; how interesting !

Brack. I forgot to tell you that I still live in sight of Brackenbury Tower. The supporters of our shield may still be seen over the lodge gates ; but in such decay, sir ! You could never guess they were the old family boars.

Sir G. Couldn’t I ? [*Aside.*] On the contrary, that would have been my very first conjecture.

Brack. By the way, my little box in Kent is within a stone’s-throw of the house of my young friend, Miss Fortescue ; the rich heiress, you know, now at Baden.

Sir G. You don’t say so ? What, that dashing girl who pretends to despise our whole sex ? You must introduce me to her !

Brack. Introduce you ?

Sir G. Decidedly ; my friend, young Malcolm, of the Guards, pressed her to dance last night, and got a rebuff that floored him. Now I’ve made a bet with Malcolm, that she shall polk with me thrice in one night before a week’s out. You must introduce me !

Brack. Impossible ! she has a particular horror of very young men.

Sir G. All the better—I like difficult women ! Where’s the sport if the game won’t run ?

Brack. Game ! sport, Sir Gerard ! this is strange language—what can you know about women ?

Sir G. [*Aside.*] Was there ever such a piece of antiquity

—does he suppose that I've reached my time of life, and gained no experience of the sex? [*Aloud.*] Come, I'll take no denial.

Brack. [*Aside.*] I don't run much risk—she won't look at him twice—and she'll see that I consort with men of my own class abroad, though too poor to do so at home.

Sir G. Now's the time, my good fellow—I saw her ten minutes since at one of the little shops in the avenue.

[*Taking BRACKENBURY'S arm and hurrying him off.*]

Brack. Stop! stop! sir. Confound it, what a twinge!

Sir G. Beg pardon—I forgot your rheumatism.

Brack. [*Going off with him slowly.*] Gout, sir! gout! gout is the hereditary complaint of the Brackenbury's.

Sir G. What a pity it wasn't confiscated with the other family property, in the Wars of the Roses.

[*As they are going, enter LANGLEY, FRANK ROCHFORD, and MRS ROCHFORD—SIR GERARD bows to MRS ROCHFORD, and goes out with BRACKENBURY.*]

Roch. Lucy, who was it that bowed to you?

Mrs R. Oh, Sir Gerard Fane, who sat with me at the *table d'hôte*.

Roch. Avoid him, dear Lucy; though so young, he's one whose notice of a woman insults her.

Mrs R. Indeed! who told you so?

Roch. A new acquaintance, but one whom I already respect; the Count Manoli!

Mrs R. Very well, Frank, I am warned.

Lang. Here, waiter; chairs, and a table—coffee!

Waiter. Directly, sir.

[*He places chairs and a table down, apart from the company, then serves coffee; LANGLEY, ROCHFORD, and MRS ROCHFORD sit.*]

Lang. Well, Frank, Lucy and I were lucky to fall in with you. You might have spared a little more time to an old fellow about to take his leave.

Roch. True, dear uncle; but I had no idea that it was

so late ; a pretty scene in the forest caught my eye, and I stayed to sketch it. See [*Producing his sketch-book*], a mother at the door of a woodland cottage, with a toddling lassie of four holding by her finger.

[*MRS ROCHFORD and LANGLEY examine the sketch.*]

Lang. My dear Lucy, you should really forbid these lonely rambles ; the rascal's always falling in with pretty faces. Look, now, at this peasant woman, with her coquettish air and limber figure.

Mrs R. Nay, uncle Langley, there's an antidote to all my jealousy in the child. As usual, Frank has given her the features, the height, the very expression of our dear little Evelyn. I think if he were to paint a Hottentot child, she would be sure to turn out like our darling at home.

Roch. There she goes, uncle ! How these mothers do rave about their little plagues in pinafores !

Mrs R. And are fathers one bit better, sir ? Would you believe now, uncle Langley, I can hardly get a sight of the miniature he took of Evelyn ? the miser keeps it all to himself in his waistcoat pocket.

Roch. A humane precaution, my dear, to prevent you from crying over it.

Mrs R. [*Holding up her parasol playfully.*] Sir, if there were not company present, I would rap your knuckles severely. My precious Evelyn ! at times I really could cry, it seems so unfeeling to have left her in London, though I am sure grandmamma will take every care of her. This holiday excursion has been very pleasant, uncle. Frank wanted a change, and we've very much enjoyed seeing you on your way to Italy. But oh, what joy the going home will be !

Lang. Well, as I start in an hour for Strasbourg, provided that confounded Hendrick sends the remittances in time—why shouldn't you go back to-morrow ?

Roch. We shall be very sorry to part with you, uncle ; but you'll forgive a mother's impatience.

Mrs R. And a father's, if you please.

Roch. Well, then, a father's—I won't deny it.

Lang. Ah ! good people, you have a happier lot than a bachelor like me. To think of a man at my years having to leave England for want of work, and become civil engineer to these projected railways in Italy !

Mrs R. It is hard, dear uncle. I am sure we both feel for you.

Lang. I know it, lassie, and must not complain. The hard bed, as they say, is of my own making. Like a fool, I gambled away a moderate fortune at twenty-five—and now at fifty-five have barely means to pay my way to the land of my exile.

Mrs R. You deserved a better fate ; for I'm sure you have never touched a card since I knew you.

Lang. No ; were I ever so rich, I would never play again, except, perhaps, for trifling stakes and with a cool head.

Roch. Forgive me, uncle ; but should you become as prosperous as we wish you, I hope you would never play more—not even for amusement.

Lang. [*Laughing.*] We'll talk of that when I've another fortune to lose. Waiter, a glass of maraschino. [*Rises and walks apart.*] I don't quite like Frank's playing the Mentor to me thus. I can't even look on at a game of *rouge et noir*, but he's always at my heels ; why if I were to risk a napoleon or two, I could but lose them.

Waiter. [*Bringing maraschino.*] The liqueur, which monsieur ordered.

Lang. [*Drinking maraschino and giving money.*] There ; that pays for all.

[*WAITER retires ; LANGLEY returns to MR and MRS ROCHFORD.*]

By the way, Frank, I'm much annoyed that old Hendrick, of Frankfort, has not yet sent the money for those jewels which we left with him. I can't start till I get the remittance.

Roch. About fifty pounds English, is it not ? six hundred florins.

Lang. Yes, that was his last offer which I wrote to accept. The money should have reached me last night.

Roch. You believe him honest?

Lang. Oh yes; besides I have his receipt for the jewels. I dealt with him when I was a young spendthrift, and thought he would give more than I should get in London;—yes, the rascal has now all my family relics except this diamond ring of my poor father's. [*Showing a diamond ring which he wears.*] That, I would not part with.

Roch. [*Looking at his watch.*] The Frankfort diligence is just due; it might be well for you to go to the office in case the jeweller or his clerk should arrive.

Lang. I wish you could go for me, Frank; do, there's a dear fellow.

Roch. Suppose we both go?

Lang. No; I want a farewell gossip with Lucy.

Roch. Very well, uncle, I'll go. Have you the receipt for the jewels?

Lang. Yes, and another for the money already prepared. [*Produces them from a pocket-book, and gives them to ROCHFORD.*] There will be no difficulty, Frank; Hendrick and his clerk both know you.

Roch. I'll start at once. I shall find you either here or at the hotel? [*Going.*]

Lang. Yes, at the hotel.—Stop, Frank, I declare I had forgotten my pistols; just call at the gunsmith's for the brace you left for me to be repaired; I may have to travel in queer places, where I should miss such trusty friends. And come back soon—no more strolls in the wood in search of interesting young mothers.

Roch. Certainly not; when I want a model of very fond foolish maternity, I have always Lucy for a sitter.

Mrs R. Beware, Frank! [*Holding up her parasol significantly.*] Remember there will be no one to protect you at the hotel. [*ROCHFORD goes out.*]

Lang. [*Aside.*] I feel my own master again now he's gone. I'll manage to get quit of Lucy, and just look in at the *rouge et noir* table, to see how life goes.—Lucy, are not those Mr and Mrs Merton, whose acquaintance we

made yesterday? Let me place you under their care for a few minutes. I have an inquiry or two to make.

Mrs R. [Rising.] Very well, uncle, but you'll not be long?

Lang. Not more than a quarter of an hour. [*They advance to another table a little behind.*] Good evening, Mrs Merton, may I entrust Mrs Rochford to you for a short time?

[*MR and MRS MERTON are at table—LANGLEY and MRS MERTON exchange salutations—MRS ROCHFORD sits—LANGLEY bows and retires, and shortly afterwards enters Conversations Haus, which VISITORS occasionally enter and quit till end of scene—Enter MISS FORTESCUE, SIR GERARD, and BRACKENBURY—MISS FORTESCUE'S entrance produces a sensation in the company.*]

Sir G. [Smoking.] Nay, on my honour, Miss Fortescue, you are too severe; if you could only guess, now, what a miracle you have accomplished——

Miss F. [Aside.] This begins to be amusing.—In what way, pray?

Sir G. Five minutes since I was bored to death with Baden—thought I had never seen a slower place——

Miss F. A cruel sentence. Poor Baden!

Sir G. Nay, that *was* my opinion; I now find the place enchanting—I have met you!

Miss F. You do credit to your bringing up! At what school?

Sir G. Harrow! Harrow!

Miss F. When do you go back there?

Sir G. Go back? On my life, you have the advantage of me.

Miss F. Oh, you don't return then?

Sir G. Return? I was talking of Harrow School!

Miss F. So was I! I fear the fine old institution of the whipping-block is out of date there——

Sir G. Madam!

Miss F. Or the school would never turn out affected mannikins, who puff their cigars in a lady's face, and who emit from their mouths two offensive things at once, their compliments, and their smoke.

Sir G. [Aside.] Confound her impertinence!—a deuced fine girl though! a filly with good action; but wants more breaking in!

[He turns away, and enters into Conversations Haus.]

Brack. Capital! You put him down most properly, dear Miss Fortescue; a young puppy scarcely out of his teens! how different must be the sentiments of such a coxcomb from the tried devotion of a neighbour like me. Ah! if you would only encourage me with a smile——

Miss F. On my word, I don't know any one at whom I smile so often.

Brack. Do be serious. If you doubt my sincerity, set me some task to prove it.

Miss F. Very well. *[Dropping her handkerchief.]* My handkerchief's dropped; pick it up.

Brack. [Hesitating.] Where is it?

Miss F. There at my foot.

Brack. [After making an awkward attempt to stoop.] The truth is, I am just now suffering from gout—the hereditary complaint of the Brackenburys—I can't very conveniently stoop.

Miss F. Alas! then you'll never do for me. I am romantic enough to desire a lover who can, at least, throw himself at my feet. *[She takes up the handkerchief.]* Forgive me, neighbour; but when an elderly gentleman forgets the gravity of age, a girl of nineteen may be pardoned if she forgets its claims.

Brack. Age, age! why I'm only fifty-five—a mere boy comparatively—I want a dozen years of the time when men are made generals or appointed to a flag-ship.

Miss F. True; but love and war are distinct services; and men are often promoted in the latter, when they would be superannuated in the former. *[Aside, observing MRS ROCHFORD.]* Surely, I know that face.

Brack. [*Aside.*] Superannuated ! I believe she's laughing at me. I'll not waste another thought on her. I'll start for England by the next *malle poste*. Laugh at a Brackenbury connected with the O'Kilmacows ! She has lost her chance. [*He goes out.*]

Miss F. [*Advancing to MRS ROCHFORD.*] It is she—My dear Lucy !

Mrs R. Helen Fortescue—My own dear Helen !

[*They shake hands*—MRS ROCHFORD bows to the MERTONS, and advances with MISS FORTESCUE to further table, where they sit.

Miss F. Lucy, my dearest companion, my other self ! What a budget we have to discuss ! You know after my poor father's death I was sent to France. You were from England when I returned ; so, positively, we have not met since you committed that awful piece of treachery.

Mrs R. I ?

Miss F. Was not my father your guardian ? Did we not live for years under the same roof with but one heart between us ? Were we not sisters in all but name ? I could have loved no sister more, and yet you must marry and desert me. Well, what is the man like ?

Mrs R. I only wish Nature had made his double for your sake.

Miss F. Thank you, my dear ; it's quite as well that Nature spared herself the trouble. Now do come with me to my apartments.

Mrs R. I must go to the hotel first, to meet my husband.

Miss F. Innocent dove ! Let it's mate coo alone for awhile ; you'll be the more welcome to the nest ; and I want you all to myself.

Mrs R. Well, for one quarter of an hour ; I must then return to a relative about to leave us.

Miss F. You must tell me all about your little Evelyn. She's not with you ?

Mrs R. Alas ; no !

Miss F. What, a sigh!—come, love! [*They rise.*]

Mrs R. I'm very foolish, Helen; but I have now and then such misgivings about my darling. If anything should happen to me, you'll not forget your old friend's child.

Miss F. [*Jestingly.*] When anything does happen to you, Lucy, I'll be reasonably kind to her, being a daughter: but oh, love, never trust me with a boy! I should avenge myself in his person on all his empty fortune-hunting sex, and if he survived to be a man—but he never would under my discipline!

Mrs R. Ah, Helen, when you're a mother!

[*They go out.*]

Re-enter ROCHFORD.

Roch. Not at the hotel—not here! What can have become of them? I'm glad, at all events, that I've got the money for the jewels, for if my uncle means to start by the voiturier to Strasbourg, there's no time to lose. It's at least an English mile to the cabaret in the forest, from which the voiturier starts. Where can he be? Heaven grant not at the gaming-table! I'll look in, though, to make sure.

[*As he is about to enter the Conversations Haus LANGLEY quits it with RINALDO and DE L'EPINE, with whom he is in altercation—SIR GERARD and others follow from the Conversations Haus and group around.*]

Rin. I say, sir, this language is an insult.

Lang. And I repeat, sir, I was a fool to play by your advice, and let myself be deluded by your confounded system.

Rin. What do you mean by being deluded?

Lang. Well, I lost every time I staked.

Rin. What then? had I any interest in your losses? why you talk as if I and the bank had been in league to rob you.

Lang. I never said so.

Rin. You insinuated as much. Retract it !

[*Peremptorily.*

Lang. I never retract under a threat.

Rin. Do you mean that I was in collusion with the bank—yes or no ?

[*Raising his cane.*

Lang. No ; though since you raise your cane, I might suspect it. There's a slight presumption that a man's a knave when he stoops to the argument of a bully.

Rin. A bully ?

De l'Ep. [*To LANGLEY.*] *Mon Dieu !* you are too warm, sir !

Rin. A bully ! You English churl, I'll teach you politeness !

De l'Ep. Nay, nay——

[*RINALDO struggles with DE L'EPINE, and advances to chastise LANGLEY.*

Roch. [*Interrupting him.*] Stay, sir ! I do not know who is in the right here ; but I will permit no violence to this gentleman.

Rin. And who are you, sir, who intrude yourself into other men's quarrels ?

Roch. One who means no offence ; but who will save you from the shame of assaulting a man nearly twice your age.

De l'Ep. [*Apart to RINALDO.*] Be cautious ; you have reason—remember your mission.

Rin. [*To ROCHFORD.*] His years shall not protect him ; nor shall you.

Roch. Assault me, then ; it will be more to your credit.

De l'Ep. [*Apart to RINALDO, and seizing his arm.*] Are you mad ? Have you not political secrets ? Would you draw on yourself the attention of the police ?

Rin. True, true, I am forced to be prudent, else I would cane him on the spot. [*Aloud to LANGLEY.*] I shall not lose sight of you, sir, be sure of it.

[*DE L'EPINE and RINALDO go out amidst the laughter of the bystanders.*

Sir G. What, there's to be no mill, then? It's a regular sell; I expected something exciting—a duel on the spot, or at all events a little pleasant assault and battery. Why should the old fellow make such a noise about a few napoleons, when he can afford to sport such a diamond ring? Perhaps it's glass, though!

[*He and some of the bystanders laugh, and enter Conversations Haus; the rest, with the exception of ROCHFORD and LANGLEY, disperse.*]

Lang. Now, Frank, don't go off; no scolding. It's of no use to make bad worse. I've been a fool, and I've paid the penalty.

Roch. It is not for me to reproach you, sir; have you lost much?

Lang. Cleared out to my last kreutzer.

Roch. But you have still the money for the jewels? Hendrick's clerk arrived by the diligence, and paid me the amount.

Lang. All gone, my dear fellow, except a few florins. You know the Count Manoli?

Roch. Perfectly; we often speak together.

Lang. Well, when I went in, the table was full; so to while away the time, I betted with the Count on the colours as they turned up; in brief, I lost to him nearly sixty napoleons.

Roch. Good heavens!

Lang. Again I played and lost. As for Manoli, he behaved like a gentleman, and agreed to wait half an hour for his debt. We must go at once to his hotel.

Roch. And you—what funds have you left for your journey?

Lang. On my life, you hit me hard there, Frank! My few remaining florins won't cover a day's expenses. How much can you lend me?

Roch. Only a trifle, I fear. I have little more than will take me back to England.

Lang. The deuce you haven't!—what's to be done? It's quite vital that I should push on to Italy, where my

first official act must be to draw my salary in advance. I tell you what, Frank, you must lend me what money you can, and raise the amount upon my diamond ring.

Roch. Your father's ring? A last relic.

Lang. My dear fellow, there's no help for it. I shall redeem it from old Hendrick in a year. Come, there it is !
[*Offers it.*]

Roch. Nay, uncle.

Lang. Oh, if you think you run any risk——

Roch. I don't mean that.

Lang. Take it, then.

Roch. Keep it till we part.

Lang. [*Replacing the ring on his finger.*] Very well ; now see what you can do for me. You have the money for the jewels about you?

Roch. Yes.

Lang. Come, then. First to pay the Count ; then a kiss, and good-bye to Lucy ; and off to the cabaret in the wood. You would rather see me in bad spirits, I know. Pshaw ! it's only the fortune of war.

Roch. True ; but much depends upon the kind of war. There are some wars in which even defeat is glorious ; others in which success has no honour, and failure no consolation.

Lang. Here's a homily ! Frank, you should have been a parson, not a painter. A parson ! ha, ha, ha !

[*They go out.*]

SCENE II.

A Wood. Moonlight.

Enter THREE OFFICERS OF POLICE.

1st Off. You know the Count Manoli by sight, you say ?

2d Off. Yes ; I never speak till I'm certain. He left his hotel, they said, for a short ride in the forest ; that's strange at this hour.

1st Off. My orders, just received, are to arrest him instantly!

2d Off. The Count Manoli! What has he done?

1st Off. Leave that to your betters. Any one starting with the voiturier to-night must pass this way.

3d Off. It's the common road.

1st Off. You are sure he was not one of the two men that passed us?

2d Off. Positive.

1st Off. There was a lad, too, wheeling an English traveller's baggage. That might be a truck, though. Voices! Stand close!

Enter LANGLEY and ROCHFORD, the latter carrying a pistol-case.

1st Off. Your servant, gentlemen. May I ask whither you are bound?

Lang. To the Black Eagle. I take the voiturier for Strasbourg.

1st Off. [*Apart to 2D OFFICER.*] Do you know them?

2d Off. Neither of them is our man.

1st Off. [*To LANGLEY.*] So you take the voiturier? You're likely to have the Count Manoli for a fellow-traveller, I hear?

Lang. You are mistaken there, I think.

1st Off. Do you know him?

Lang. For a capital horseman. He spurred off but now as if he were pursued by the devil or the police.

1st Off. On which road?

Lang. That to Frankfort.

1st Off. [*Apart to others.*] We're off the scent, I fear. [*To LANGLEY and ROCHFORD.*] Good night, gentlemen. [*To LANGLEY.*] Excuse me, that ring of yours sparkles, and may draw notice. This neighbourhood is as famous for sharpers as for princes.

Lang. Thanks for your caution. Good night.

1st Off. Good night.

[OFFICERS go out.]

Lang. Well reminded, Frank ; here is the ring. Come, no scruples, I've had your money.

Roch. I'm sorry I'm obliged to take it.

Lang. [*Giving it.*] There—there—draw your glove over it. By the way, Frank, there's something wrong about the Count Manoli : I had no sooner paid him my debt, than he sprang to horse, and was off like the wind.

Roch. His countrymen are impulsive.

Lang. And some Englishmen too, you think. And now, Frank, go back ; remember, Lucy had not returned when we hurried away ; she will be anxious about you.

Roch. But the road's lonely.

Lang. There's a bright moon, and I know every step ; no further, I insist.

Roch. Good-bye, then ; God bless you ! Here's your pistol-case. [*Gives it to* LANGLEY.]

Lang. God bless you, dear Frank ! [*They shake hands.*] Don't think worse of the old fellow than you can help.

Roch. Dear uncle, only be as good a friend to yourself as you have ever been to me. Farewell ! farewell !

Lang. Now, George Langley, a stout heart ; the world's before you. Adieu ! love to Lucy—adieu ! [*He goes out.*]

Roch. Adieu ! and so we part—ships holding together on a brief course ; then severed on a wide and changeful sea—whether ever to anchor again in the same port is known but to Him whose breath is the impulse of our fate. Who comes here ?

Enter FRITZ, *wheeling a truck.*

Stay—stay—you are the lad who took Mr Langley's luggage to the cabaret ?

Fritz. Yes ; he'll be quite in time, sir ; he has a good twenty minutes yet.

Roch. Your pace is quicker than mine, my boy ; when you reach the hotel, let Mrs Rochford know that I shall be back shortly.

Fritz. Very well, sir.

Roch. Don't fail, now.

Fritz. You may depend on me. [He goes out.

Roch. It was hardly kind of me to leave him till he reached the cabaret. Whether because my poor uncle's thoughtless disposition makes me fear for him, or because there's sadness in all partings, I have never felt for him so much tenderness—almost apprehension, as now. How good he was to me when a boy—gay, genial heart, how he entered into all my sports, and became himself a child! How often have I sat on his knee by a Christmas fire, and thought his cheery smile was made to match it. I have half a mind to follow him. Lucy will be freed from all anxiety about me now. [*A report of fire-arms is heard.*] What's that? [*A second report.*] There again; it comes from the direction which he took! It's not a night for a foul deed, or I should fear—nay, I do—I must be satisfied. Langley, uncle Langley!

[He goes out, following LANGLEY.

SCENE III.

Another part of the Wood. Moonlight.

RINALDO, DE L'EPINE, and LANGLEY are discovered.

DE L'EPINE, kneeling supports LANGLEY, who is desperately wounded. RINALDO stands a little apart, pistol in hand.

De l'Ep. This is an ugly affair, Rinaldo.

Rin. He provoked his fate.

Lang. [*Faintly.*] You forced it upon me—compelled me to fight.

Rin. Yes, you had insulted me grossly, and in public. I learned your movements, and could not suffer you to escape without satisfaction; but you fell in a fair duel. You fought with your own weapons, mind, though we provided others.

De l'Ep. [*To LANGLEY.*] Ah! why did you not apologise?

Lang. Too late to ask. Fly, fly—while there is yet time !

De l'Ep. You're a gallant fellow.

Rin. De l'Epine, we must indeed fly. Remember, not only our liberty, but the secrets of a cause are at stake.

De l'Ep. What would you do ?

Rin. Start at once by the voiturier to Strasbourg.

De l'Ep. It's hard to leave you thus ; but we must, even to send assistance. Come, the case may not be so bad ; lean on me, I'll be very gentle ; so. [*He props up* LANGLEY.] Poor fellow !

Rin. Quick, quick ! moments are precious.

De l'Ep. [*To* LANGLEY.] Help will come. Keep up—keep up. Now, Rinaldo ! [*To* LANGLEY.] Help will come.

[RINALDO and DE L'EPINE go out.]

Lang. No help will serve me now. I grow faint. Frank—poor Frank—if he knew this !

Enter ROCHFORD.

Roch. Was it excited fancy, or did I indeed catch a voice ? [*A groan.*] Who's that ? It is he ! Uncle Langley !

Lang. Ah, Frank, Frank !

Roch. Merciful Heaven ! [LANGLEY attempts to rise, ROCHFORD supports him.] He'll bleed to death. What villain has done this ?

Lang. My own folly. No vengeance. Frank, I'm dying.

Roch. Oh no ! Help, there !—help !

Lang. Bless you ! Lucy—the pet at home—little Evelyn ! Ah ! no more games—no more—Frank !

[*He sinks back and dies.*]

Roch. [*Kneeling by his side.*] Langley, dear uncle : not a sound—he's gone ! O night of horror ! how the still moonlight seems to mock this deed ! Ah, a pistol !

[*He takes up and tries to examine pistol, then conceals it in his bosom.*]

Enter THREE OFFICERS OF POLICE, as before.

1st Off. I could swear the shots came from this direction. See—see—a man on his knees! What do you here? [*Laying his hand on ROCHFORD'S shoulder.*]

Roch. [*Starting up.*] Who speaks? The murderer!
[*Seizes 1ST OFFICER.*]

1st Off. Take off your hand. If murder has been done, perhaps you can tell us about it.

2d Off. [*Examining LANGLEY.*] The man's quite dead—these are the two persons whom we last met.

1st Off. [*To ROCHFORD.*] Now, sir, as you may see, we are officers of the police; we wait your explanation.

Roch. I can give none.

1st Off. [*Pointing to the body.*] We met you with this man some minutes back.

Roch. I parted from him almost instantly; soon after, hearing the report of arms, I returned and found him. He was then dying.

1st Off. Strange that you should have been absent just in the crisis of time. Hold up your hand. [*ROCHFORD holds up his hand.*] Your glove's wet, smeared with blood.

Roch. It may be so.

1st Off. Take your glove off. [*ROCHFORD obeys; 1ST OFFICER takes glove.*] What's that on your finger? a diamond ring! I noticed one like it on your companion's hand.

Roch. That is the ring he wore.

1st Off. I don't doubt it!

Roch. This poor gentleman was my kinsman. He gave me the ring in exchange for money which I furnished to him.

1st Off. You couldn't afford, then, to lend him the money?

Roch. Alas! no.

1st Off. You admit, then, that you were poor? [*Apart to 2D OFFICER.*] That shows his motive! [*To ROCHFORD.*] Why do you keep that hand in your breast?

[*He roughly shakes ROCHFORD'S hand, from which a pistol drops, which 1ST OFFICER picks up.*] So! a pistol—and just discharged.

Roch. Yes; I seized it, as it might lead to detection.

1st Off. And be sure it will! Now, mark: a few minutes since you were the victim's companion; we now find him murdered—his ring on your finger—yourself by his body—the murderous weapon on your person, though you are unable to explain his death. You must with us to Baden. I arrest you for murder and robbery!

Roch. Murder! robbery! Beware, sir!

3d Off. Here is the fellow-pistol, and a case.

1st Off. Give them to me. [*To ROCHFORD.*] Now, sir!

Roch. Charged with his murder!—O monstrous! [*Aside.*] And yet the proofs seem to thicken and cohere. Lucy, my own Lucy, God help thee! [*1ST OFFICER touches him on the shoulder, and signs to him to proceed.*] I'm ready!

1st Off. This way! [*To OFFICER.*] Remove the body.

[*ROCHFORD goes out, preceded by 1ST OFFICER, and followed by 2D and 3D OFFICERS with body.*]

SCENE IV.

Front of the Conversations Haus as before. Moonlight.
The scene discovers various persons entering or quitting the Conversations Haus; amongst the latter, SCHMIDT, Hendrick's clerk.

Enter from Conversations Haus SIR GERARD FANE, smoking.

Sir G. Well, for once, I leave a winner. But what's the use of money? it won't buy a sensation. Ages since, there was a fellow who offered a reward for a new pleasure. Gad! if life was so stale in his time, what must it be now? Nothing like a sensation ever comes my way.

[*Voices at side, without, "Halloa there!" A group form on stage; other persons enter; a buzz of voices, amidst which are heard the words "Murder!" "Robbery!" "Seized by the police!" &c. &c.*] What's that?—murder! robbery! Ah, perhaps affairs are looking up! [*Approaching group.*] What is all this?

Schmidt. There's a report that an English gentleman has been murdered—a Mr Langley. I came over on business to him this very morning.

Sir G. Langley! I recollect. I saw the man at the *rouge-et-noir* table. He sported a fine diamond ring, did he not?

Voices. [*From group.*] Hush, hush!—the police.

Enter OFFICERS OF POLICE, guarding ROCHFORD.

Schmidt. They have the man in custody.

1st Off. Halt awhile. Does any one here recognise this ring? [*Exhibiting it.*]

Sir G. Yes, I do, by its old fashion. I noticed it on Langley's finger.

1st Off. Good; you may be needed, sir.

Schmidt. [*Astonished.*] What, Mr Rochford—Langley's nephew!

1st Off. Do you know the prisoner?

Schmidt. Yes. I paid him six hundred florins to-night on account of his uncle.

1st Off. [*To 2D OFFICER.*] Six hundred florins on the murdered man's account! Here's motive indeed.

2d Off. He had not nearly that sum about him.

Roch. He had paid it for a debt at play to the Count Manoli.

1st Off. Who, conveniently for you, happens to have fled.

Roch. You exceed your duty, sir; these are matters for my judges, not for you.

Sir G. [*Who has been peering into ROCHFORD'S face.*] The fellow has some pluck—what a look!

[*The group close round ROCHFORD and OFFICERS.*]

Enter MRS ROCHFORD attended by NEUNER, the landlord.

Mrs R. Here, landlord, this way ; these gentlemen can perhaps inform us.

Neuner. Gentlemen, this lady, staying at my hotel, has heard a report of some foul practice in the forest ; she is alarmed for her husband, who was last seen there.

Mrs R. Yes, his name is Rochford.

Voices. Rochford !

[The group divides, and MRS ROCHFORD recognises her husband.]

Mrs R. Frank, Frank ! Oh, I've been in such trouble !

1st Off. Alas, madam ! I fear worse is in store for you.

Roch. *[To OFFICER.]* One moment. Lucy—*[They embrace.]*—dear loving wife, the truth will come best from my lips—I'm a prisoner.

Mrs R. A prisoner !—on what charge ?

Roch. One that you will laugh to scorn.

Mrs R. *[Passionately.]* On what charge ?

Roch. My poor uncle has been murdered.

Mrs R. Uncle Langley ?—horrible !

Roch. I am accused of the crime.

Mrs R. *[Bewildered.]* Of his murder ?—ha, ha, ha !

Roch. Appearances are against me ; but fear not, I can explain all.

Mrs R. Explain ! am I awake ?

Roch. Lucy, you will never doubt me ?

Mrs R. Doubt you—you ! Frank, my mind wanders ; keep me close.

1st Off. Be calm, madam ; your husband goes to prison.

Mrs R. To prison ? then I with him.

1st Off. It cannot be.

Roch. Lucy, obey for my sake. *[Aside.]* Oh, this is the keenest pang of all ! her name—that of my child, may be stained in mine. My own, we must part.

Mrs R. Never !

Roch. Lucy, you're the wife of an innocent man.

Mrs R. Yes.

Roch. Then you will say, My husband is innocent, I will not tremble; he goes to prison, but it is to meet a slander, to redeem his name; he will redeem it—I will let him go. [Unwinding her arms.]

Mrs R. Go, Frank, go!

Roch. Bless you! [Kissing her.] Be gentle with her, my friend. [Resigns her to NEUNER.] Lead on, gentlemen.

[Music. MRS ROCHFORD lies insensible in NEUNER'S arms; ROCHFORD is going out in charge of OFFICERS, and followed by others, as act drop falls.]

Fifteen years are supposed to elapse between the 1st and 2d Acts.

ACT II., SCENE I.

A drawing-room in MISS FORTESCUE'S country house near Dover; the grounds are seen at back through an open French window. The scene discovers MISS FORTESCUE and BRACKENBURY, both seated.

Brack. Well, then, dear Miss Fortescue, we may consider all finally settled, except for one thing.

Miss F. What's that?

Brack. Why, since my son Gilbert, and your *protégée* Evelyn Rochford, are to be man and wife, you ought really to be more explicit.

Miss F. About what?

Brack. About Miss Rochford's father. You know I only consent to the match because Gilbert is resolved upon it.

Miss F. And because I promised Evelyn six thousand pounds on her marriage.

Brack. True; though an old family, we are too poor to dispense with money; still, as my son's wife Evelyn will assume an ancient name, and——

Miss F. Pardon me, neighbour, if I'm rather tired of your ancient name. A man's family is not like a Stilton cheese—the better for being mouldy.

Brack. But you'll grant we have a right to know with whom we intermarry. Now, as to Evelyn's father, who was he?

Miss F. I have told you twenty times that I never saw him, and that what I heard was not to his advantage. He left England fifteen years ago, and is probably dead by this time.

Brack. You can assure me, at least, that he was a gentleman?

Miss F. My good friend, I can assure you of nothing. If your son marry Evelyn, he must take her at all risks.

Brack. These are hard terms.

Miss F. Then reject them.

Brack. But can't you say——

Miss F. Only what I have said before. Mr Rochford's wife was my dearest friend; she died about a year after her husband left England, and, in compliance with her last wish, I took her Evelyn, then a child of five, under my protection. That's all I can say; if you're not satisfied, you'd better break off the match.

Brack. Don't be angry.

Miss F. I doubt whether it would break your son's heart if you did. I can tell you, Evelyn is by no means pleased with his careless manner to her of late.

Brack. Ah! dear Miss Fortescue, juvenile lovers are careless, it's the fashion with them; but what wonder, when they see how the enduring devotion of mature middle-aged men——

Miss F. Is cruelly slighted. I know what you mean to say. Fifteen years ago, I refused you at Baden, and since then you've only gained one point in your favour.

Brack. And what's that?

Miss F. Why, that you're fifteen years older; and were I to marry you, my penalty for that gross folly would be so much the shorter.

Brack. Ah! you would sooner be a widow. I'm obliged.

Miss F. You see you will stroke my fur the wrong way; what can you expect but a scratch?

Brack. Well, Gilbert will be happy. [Sighs.]

Miss F. Yes, think of that; I know your pride in him, your sacrifices. You don't play the lover well; but I'm sure you always shone as a father. And now I must really dismiss you; I expect a visitor every minute.

Brack. Indeed!

Miss F. Yes, a Mr Vernon. Evelyn needs a finishing master for her drawing, and Brown, the Dover printseller, recommends this gentleman. Here's your cane, neighbour. [Gives it.] We're friends again. [They shake hands.] And so we shall be, if you will only treat me like a confirmed old maid, as I am. Good morning, my friend, good morning.

Brack. Ah, Miss Fortescue! [Goes out sighing.]

Miss F. I'm vexed to the soul to evade him thus about Evelyn's father; such concealment is repugnant to me. But dear charming creature as, spite of her little foibles, she is, how would the world scorn her if the truth were known! The child of a convict, imprisoned for life as a robber, and though, by some strange lenity, acquitted of murder, believed by all men to have been guilty of it! It's true there were some faint suspicions against others; that fact saved his life. Rochford's tale, though wild, was still possible. Yet the proofs were strong enough to convince even me—any one but his loving, credulous wife, who died protesting his innocence. No; I dare not reveal to others what I have hid from Evelyn herself. Thank heaven, she believes her father dead, as indeed he may be; and all she knows from me is, that he broke her mother's heart.

Enter EVELYN by door.

What, my darling! I thought you were with Gilbert.

Eve. [Sadly.] Yes, dear friend, he has just left me,

Miss F. For a whole hour possibly ; that is a trial.

Eve. No trial to him !

[*Sits on tabouret at the feet of MISS FORTESCUE, who caresses her.*

Miss F. Another love-quarrel ! what has happened ? Won't the monster go on his knees and swear that she's perfection ? Was he five minutes late to-day ? or what other enormity ?

Eve. Don't jest !

Miss F. I thought him so kind and good-humoured.

Eve. It's that eternal good-humour which freezes me. He's always calm, smiling, and indifferent. I do like impulse in a man.

Miss F. A dangerous element, Evelyn.

Eve. So is fire ; but we risk the danger for the comfort.

Miss F. Why did you fall in love with him ?

Eve. He was so different then—all ardour and devotion. Since that last visit to London, when he entered at the Temple, he's come back as dry as one of his own law-books, and throws as much romance into a love-suit as he would into a Chancery one.

Miss F. It's but a manner that he has caught. Depend upon it, he has been laughed at in London for being romantic, and now, like many people of warm feelings, shrinks from displaying them. The whole sex, as you know, is my aversion ; but, for a man, Gilbert is really passable.

Eve. Ah, kind friend ! you say this to comfort me, because you know that I do—do love him dearly. [*Weeping.*] But why can't he show a little interest in me ? How unlike he is to some other men—Sir Gerard Fane, for instance.

Miss F. I dislike Sir Gerard Fane more than ever ! If I did not respect his relative, Captain Tresham, with whom he's now staying at Dover, I would forbid him the house.

Eve. Nay, he is so agreeable and well-bred. You're too severe.

Miss F. And you, too gracious. I'm quite serious. At the Ashford flower-show you let him monopolise you. At the officers' ball at Dover you were his constant partner : since then he has been here repeatedly ; the last time you received him as if he, not Gilbert, had been your suitor.

Eve. I remember. Gilbert's coldness had stung me that morning ; he had pressed me on a subject that always tortures me. [Rises.]

Miss F. What subject ?

Eve. That of my father, on whose life rests such a cloud. What could I say ?

Miss F. Alas, nothing !

Eve. Oh, if you but knew how my father died, or what were his errors.

Miss F. Be thankful that a veil hides them. Enough that by all report they cost you a mother's life.

Eve. Still I yearn to know—yes yearn—even while I dread.

Miss F. The mystery is now buried. Come, love, turn to happier thoughts. [Looking off.] See, here comes Gilbert ; no more tears.

Eve. [Aside.] He shall not see them. I'll get to my drawing.

She goes to an easel, on which is an unfinished sketch in colours. Brushes and a palette with colours are at hand ; she takes up a brush. MISS FORTESCUE occupies herself in writing. Enter GILBERT.

Gil. What, Evelyn, at your drawing ?

Eve. [Pretending to be absorbed.] I cannot get this water to look transparent.

Gil. Will your ladyship deign me a word ?

Eve. Oh, it's you, Gilbert.

Gil. Yes, it is. Have you quite decided ?

Eve. [*Looking at sketch.*] What a dull green that is! Decided about what?

Gil. Why the Dover Regatta, of course. Now won't you allow me to drive you over?

Eve. I told you before, Gilbert, that I was engaged.

Gil. Very well; you know that your will is always mine.

Eve. [*Aside.*] He doesn't make the least effort to persuade me.—Yes, Gilbert, you generally agree in my decisions when they relieve you of my company.

Gil. My dear Evelyn, be just. You tell me twice that you're engaged, and don't wish to go. How can I imagine that you have nothing whatever to do, and would very much like the excursion?

Eve. I shouldn't like it, and I don't mean to go.

Gil. [*Laughing.*] Well, don't be angry; I only supposed that you knew your own mind.

Eve. [*Aside.*] There, he's laughing—my displeasure is but sport to him.

Miss F. [*Advancing.*] Gilbert, Evelyn is really engaged; she expects Mr Vernon, a drawing-master from Dover.

Gil. After he leaves, we might still be in time for the regatta.

Eve. [*Aside.*] Ah, perhaps he does wish me to go!—We should be very late, Gilbert; it would be scarcely worth while.

Gil. I'm sure it wouldn't, if you don't care for it.

Eve. [*Excitedly.*] I tell you once more, I don't care for it.

[*Retires and sits.*]

Gil. Then I'll just tell Watson we sha'n't want the ponies.

[*Going.*]

Miss F. [*Apart to him.*] A word, Gilbert; she thinks you indifferent.

Gil. Indifferent!—why? I grant I'm not always at her feet, quoting poetry, as I once was. I've lived in London since then.

Miss F. And been laughed out of your heart, eh?

Gil. No; but out of my sentimentality. I was properly

roasted for it by Templars and club men. I've learned, Miss Fortescue, that while it's manly to feel love, it's childish to prate of it. Acts for me, not talk. Mere words are like steam when it escapes. There's much noise, but the engine's at a stand. Deeds are like steam when it's confined. There's less sound, but the train moves on.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Signor Lancia, ma'am, has just arrived from London.

Miss F. Signor Lancia! Say I'll come to him at once. [*SERVANT goes out.*] Lancia, my dear delightful patriot, the only man I have ever met who has love for his country, and who never pretends it to woman! Evelyn, you must join us; but first, foolish children, make up your quarrel. Troubles, like weeds, spring up of their own accord; there's no need for us to sow them.

[*She goes out.*]

Eve. Gilbert, she's right. I was out of humour, and unjust.

Gil. Say no more, Evelyn, I beg. I had almost forgotten it.

Eve. Forgotten it! If you had been angry, I should have felt it for weeks.

Gil. Nothing can be better; if I forget your little whims, and you attend to mine, we shall have a reasonable chance of being happy.

Eve. My whims, sir! you take them easily.

Gil. I may as well, love, as I shall have to bear with them for life.

Eve. To bear with them. You're under no compulsion, Gilbert; if I cannot be a wife to be prized, I'll not be one to be endured.

Gil. [*Good-humouredly.*] Do you mean to be unendurable, then?

Eve. [*Aside.*] He hasn't a spark of love for me. I can't even vex him.

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Sir Gerard Fane.

Eve. [*Aside.*] So.

Gil. [*Displeased, aside.*] Here again !

Enter SIR GERARD.—SERVANT *goes out.*

Sir G. Good morning, Miss Rochford. How d'ye do, Mr Brackenbury?

Eve. Good morning, Sir Gerard. [*Shakes hands with him cordially.*] I almost feared you had forgotten us.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] Good. I was here only three days since.—Miss Rochford, you give me a temptation to be absent.

Eve. What can that be?

Sir G. The pleasure of hearing that you regret it.

[*Bows.*]

Eve. But you are too generous to seek pleasure at the expense of your friends.

Gil. [*Aside.*] Humph !

Sir G. Nay, too selfish to remove their concern, when it so much flatters me.

Gil. [*Aside.*] What next?

Sir G. And now to my errand. This is what they call a great day at Dover. Do you patronise the regatta?

Eve. I fear not. It must be an interesting sight.

Sir G. You think so? My trap's at the inn ; dare I ask for the pleasure of driving the ladies over?

Eve. [*Aside.*] I'm glad Gilbert hears this. [*Aloud.*] Oh, that would be delightful !

Gil. [*Aside.*] What, after she refused me !

Eve. [*To* SIR GERARD.] But I must refer you to Miss Fortescue.

Sir G. She's now in the grounds. I just caught sight of her with that clever Italian, Signor Lancia. I'll offer my petition at once.

[*Going.*]

Eve. Wait, Sir Gerard, on second thoughts—

Sir G. Nay, I sha'n't permit you to retract ; I told you I was selfish.

[*He goes out.*]

Eve. [*Aside, glancing at GILBERT.*] How grave he looks ! Oh, I've been very wrong ; but he so provoked me.—Gilbert !

Gil. [*Very coldly.*] Miss Rochford.

Eve. Miss Rochford ! why, you're angry.

Gil. Too much pained, madam, for anger.

Eve. [*Aside.*] Pained ; then he does love me. Indeed, Gilbert, I won't go to the regatta.

Gil. You'd better tell this to Sir Gerard.

[*Taking his hat and going.*]

Eve. You're not going ; listen to me.

Gil. Pardon me ; some other time.

[*Bows, and goes slowly to window.*]

Eve. No, now—now ; forgive me, and you shall be as good-humoured as you please. What, Gilbert !

Gil. [*Turning to her reluctantly.*] Evelyn—Evelyn !

Eve. [*Clasping her hands, and affecting childish penitence.*] Naughty Evelyn !

[*He laughs and shakes his head, she takes his arm ; they pass out by open window into grounds.*]

SCENE II.

Grounds adjoining MISS FORTESCUE'S house—house in the distance ; on one side of grounds a lodge ; rustic seat.

Enter JACKSON and MORLEY from door of lodge.

Mor. So you're lodge-keeper here, friend ?

Jack. Yes, sir, for these fifteen years.

Mor. You're positive that Sir Gerard Fane is now in the house yonder ?

Jack. Positive, sir ; you'll be sure to find Sir Gerard at the house.

Mor. Thank you, I'll wait for him. You've a fine prospect here.

Jack. Yes, sir, the view's much admired. It's wonderful what a sight of artists we have hereabouts in summer.

[*Pointing.*] Look, there's one of 'em. [*Pointing off.*] A queer gentleman he is, to my thinking.

Mor. Why so?

Jack. Well, he came here three days since, and asked leave to sketch in the grounds.

Mor. That was but natural.

Jack. Yes ; but I fancy it was all make-believe. After a few scratches with his pencil, he began questioning me about the ladies of the house.

Mor. Rather inquisitive, eh ?

Jack. Yes, perhaps so ; but in a mild, gentleman-like sort of manner. But the strangest thing was how he would now and then fix his eyes on me, as if my words was guineas, and then look away as careless of 'em as if they was pebbles.

Mor. Some eccentric man of genius, I suppose.

Jack. I can't say as to that. But you should have seen him when the brougham passed through. "Who's that?" says he, all of a shake. "My mistress, Miss Fortescue," says I. "Indeed," he answered, with a gasp, like. "I hope she won't think I'm taking a liberty?" "Not a bit, sir," says I ; "she never shuts her gate against artists." Then I told him that my young lady, Miss Rochford, was a pretty tidy artist herself, and that Mr Brown, the Dover printseller, was on the look-out for a first-rate master, just to finish her off. La ! what a start he gave !—He snatched up his portfolio—wrung my hand as if I had been his best friend, and a minute after was tramping hard on his way to Dover !

Mor. Perhaps to make interest for this very situation.

Jack. In that case, why doesn't he march boldly up to the house? Look at him there, as he sits with his head propped on his arm. Ah ! he rises—he's coming this way.

Mor. Don't watch him ; he may dislike observation. I've still a question or two to ask you ; suppose we walk into the lodge here.

Jack. With all my heart, sir.

[*They enter lodge.*]

Enter ROCHFORD, *who has assumed the surname of Vernon; he advances with a feeble step, and places his portfolio on seat.*

Roch. Is this a dream? About to see her!—the long—almost hopeless yearning of years fulfilled. Have I indeed been released from my prison?—shall I not wake and be still there? Released!—yes, pardoned for the services I rendered; but my innocence still unproved. Why do I delay? I have the needful testimonials, yet tremble to approach her. How can I meet her as a stranger? If she have her mother's look—if she speak to me with her mother's voice, how shall I command myself?—I must! I must learn whether she cherishes the thought of a father, or turns from it as disgrace. If the latter, I will not shame her. I will quit her—quit her unknown—though it break my heart!

[Throws himself on bench in emotion.

Re-enter MORLEY.

Mor. *[After observing ROCHFORD.]* I'm not mistaken; it must be he! *[Advancing.]* What, Vernon?

Roch. You, Morley! my best friend, who helped me when destitute!

Mor. Nay; I but recognised your merit as an artist, and employed you to instruct my daughter.

Roch. But what brings you from London, Morley?

Mor. I'm on the track of a superfine gentleman—Sir Gerard Fane.

Roch. Sir Gerard Fane! *[Aside.]* Years back, the scandal of Baden.

Mor. Yes; my friend, Sir Gerard, who, having first borrowed money of me on mortgage, deigned to improve our acquaintance, and even be a guest at my table.

Roch. A dangerous one!

Mor. He proved so. In a short time he pursued my

daughter with his attentions. The dear simple girl was charmed and flattered—in short, permitted herself to love him.

Roch. He proposed for her ?

Mor. Not in words, he was too wary for that ; but by his intimacy—his seeming tenderness—by all the nameless acts which speak to a woman's heart. After awhile, on pretence of an advantageous purchase, he applied to me for a fresh loan of some hundreds. As he moved in a different sphere from mine, I had then heard nothing to his discredit ; I would not distrust one who might be my son-in-law. I lent him the sum—this time without security ; soon his visits grew fewer—then ceased ! He left us, and fled to the Continent—I, defrauded of my money—my child, of her hopes and affections.

Roch. Well that she escaped from him !

Mor. Well indeed ! I have since learned that it is this man's execrable pastime to win the attachment of trusting women, and, when he can do so safely, to compromise their reputations.

Roch. Villain ! and he goes unpunished ?

Mor. Yes, he is too crafty to commit himself.

Roch. And you are now in search of him ?

Mor. Ay, to recover my money ; or at least to punish him. He is at this moment in yonder house.

Roch. At Miss Fortescue's ?

Mor. Yes ; it is even reported at Dover that he has a design on one of the inmates.

Roch. [*With agitation.*] What design ?

Mor. To repair by marriage the fortune he has lost on the turf.

Roch. Marriage ! with whom ?

Mor. It is said with a Miss Rochford, who resides here.

Roch. Miss Rochford ! [*Aside.*] Thank heaven I'm in time !

Mor. Stay ; I hear voices. Can it be he ? No——

[*Looking off.*]

Roch. Who then? [*Listening intently.*] Women?

Mor. A lady and a gentleman.

Roch. [*Still listening, but without looking.*] Hist! they turn back.

Mor. [*Still looking off.*] Yes, they strike into another walk. But look, a new form appears, that of a younger woman; she approaches us—nearer—still nearer. How fresh and fair a creature; yet her look is pensive—a flesh-and-blood April for your painting, friend artist. [*ROCHFORD grasps the seat by which he supports himself.*] What's this, Vernon?—you're ill.

Roch. No, not ill. [*Aside.*] Courage—she's here.

Enter EVELYN; ROCHFORD totters forward and gazes on her earnestly. MORLEY removes his hat to EVELYN, who returns his salutation. ROCHFORD then glances at MORLEY, and remembering himself, removes his hat to EVELYN.

Eve. Your look, sir, is a sort of inquiry. Have you any question for me?

Roch. [*Struggling with his emotion.*] Young lady, if your name is——

Eve. My name is Rochford.

Roch. I have a letter for you, Miss Rochford.

[*He gives her letter.*]

Mor. As you've business here, Vernon, I'll retire.

[*Aside.*] He doesn't hear me—strange!

[*Bows to EVELYN, and goes out.*]

Eve. [*Who has opened letter.*] Oh, from the printseller. You are the drawing-master he wrote about?

Roch. [*Who has been lost in watching her, suddenly recovering himself.*] Yes, yes, madam; I have his recommendation, and other testimonials. I have specimens too——specimens——

[*Pauses, and presses his hand to his forehead.*]

Eve. You seem faint; the heat has overcome you; lean on me.

Roch. You are all goodness ; but I am myself again. Being very poor, the fear of your rejection for a moment unnerved me.

Eve. I grieve that you are unfortunate. Pray, walk with me to the house.

Roch. [*Taking up portfolio.*] Willingly, madam. [*Aside.*] Strength, Heaven, strength !

Enter SIR GERARD FANE, meeting them.

Sir G. Occupied, Miss Rochford ?—or may I again urge my request ?

Eve. [*Courteously.*] Thanks, Sir Gerard, but it would be in vain to-day ; Miss Fortescue declines. [*Passes on.*

Roch. [*Aside.*] Sir Gerard !

[*Regarding SIR GERARD fixedly.*

Sir G. [*As EVELYN goes out.*] I shall plead once more. [*Regarding ROCHFORD.*] You will know me, friend, when we next meet.

Roch. Possibly, sir. I have a retentive memory.

[*Follows EVELYN out.*

Sir G. What does he mean ? I could almost fancy I had seen him before. [*Throws himself down on the garden bench.*] I hope the rascal knows nothing to prejudice me with Evelyn. It's plain she likes me ; each time that I call, she gives me a warmer welcome. That of to-day was a challenge ! The world says she'll have her friend's money. Most likely, too, she has some fortune of her own. Yes, thoroughbred as I am, I must sacrifice myself, and go into the shafts of matrimony. There's no help for it.

Enter MORLEY ; he stands apart and observes SIR GERARD FANE.

With fortune flown out of the window, and want thundering at the door—with that revengeful old Morley on the watch—[*Observing MORLEY.*] Eh ! talk of the devil, &c., I could swear that's he !—Here's a fix ! [*Advancing to*

MORLEY *with feigned delight.*] What, Morley, my good friend ! [*Offers his hand.*] Not shake hands ?

Mor. With you, Sir Gerard ?

Sir G. My dear fellow, if I'm so disagreeable to you, why do you come after me ?

Mor. Why ? For the money you wheedled out of me.

Sir G. Oh ! that trifling loan.

Mor. With which you decamped to the Continent ; but I heard you were come back.

Sir G. Yes, for the express purpose of paying you. I grew quite uneasy. "That worthy Morley," I said, "will be anxious about his money."

Mor. A little.

Sir G. All right ; 'twill be at your banker's next week. And now, dear Morley, your hand.

Mor. No, sir ; not to the spendthrift—the libertine—the gamester——

Sir G. [*Soothingly.*] Not quite so loud. Go on, Morley.

Mor. The impostor who deserted my child !

Sir G. On my life, you're unjust ! I admired your daughter—who could help it ? but I am, as you say, a spendthrift and a rover. I knew she would have been wretched with me ; so I conquered my passion. I wasn't selfish enough to marry her.

Mor. Hypocrite !

Sir G. There's gratitude ! Come this way, let's talk matters over. [*Offering his arm, which MORLEY rejects.*

Mor. I demand my debt.

Sir G. Very natural ; but not so loud, not so loud. This way, dear Morley.

Mor. I'll not be duped twice.

Sir G. Of course not. Take my arm. What, you won't—you really won't ? Oh, very well !

[*They go out at side opposite to that taken by EVELYN and ROCHFORD.*

SCENE III.

Drawing-room, as before.

Enter EVELYN by window, followed by ROCHFORD.

Eve. Walk in, Mr Vernon ; you still look tired, pray sit. [*He bows and sits, while she takes off her hat and scarf.*] I'm quite impatient to begin. With Miss Fortescue's consent, I'll take my first lesson to-morrow.

Roch. Shall I show you my sketches ?

[*Opens his portfolio.*

Eve. Do so ; but I must warn you, you'll have a giddy pupil ; I shall try your patience.

Roch. It will hold out.

Eve. I've ordered refreshment in the next room. Till it's ready, may I run through your portfolio ?

Roch. Certainly.

Eve. [*Taking sketches from portfolio, and examining them one by one.*] A scene in Switzerland. How exquisite a contrast ! The nook of green valley with its cattle and simple herdsmen, surrounded by mountain walls half veiled in mist—like our little human life, rounded by eternity.

Roch. [*Enthusiastically.*] You have the soul of a painter.

Eve. Ah, but not his hand. This is far beyond me.

[*Lays it aside.*

Roch. What do you say to this ?

Eve. Sunset on the Rhine. How grandly that old fortress stands out ! Still too difficult. [*Lays it aside.*] That's a fine clump of trees ; perhaps I could manage that. [*Lays it aside.*] But what's this that looks so like a prison ?

Roch. It is one—a prison in Germany.

[*She lays it aside.*

Eve. And here's another ; surely it's a prison-cell with its lonely inmate ?

Roch. You are right.

Eve. These are gloomy subjects.

Roch. They are illustrations for a story.

Eve. A story—do you mean a romance?

Roch. You may call it so.

Eve. Oh, I delight so in romance ! Do you know the author?

Roch. Yes, the poor artist beside you, obliged to eke out a living by his pen as well as pencil, is himself the author.

Eve. You ! Author and artist both ! Then you're what's called a genius. How delightful ! What is the plot of the tale ? Do tell me.

Roch. [*Aside.*] She leads to the very point. It relates to a father and a daughter.

Eve. A father ! [*Aside, turning away.*] He little knows the grief of that word to me.

Roch. [*Aside, watching her.*] A father ! She shrinks from the very name !

Eve. Well, Mr Vernon ?

Roch. [*Affecting a smile.*] Young lady, the story is a long one. Yet perhaps some day when you have patience——

Eve. You will tell it ? I shall hold you to your word. Now follow me. [*Rising.*] You must need refreshment. [*Archly.*] Do you know I'm getting almost afraid of you as you write romances. I'm told that you clever authors put every one you meet into your books. Pray don't introduce me.

Roch. You are quite safe.

Eve. If you do, I shall expect to be flattered. I don't object to a trifling fault or two, just to keep me human ; but you must make me all that's noble and high-hearted.

Roch. I will try hard, if I undertake the task.

Eve. Come then, it's a compact—come. [*They go out.*]

Enter MISS FORTESCUE and SIR GERARD.

Miss F. You must excuse me, Sir Gerard ; I am much

engaged to-day. I thought you were at Dover by this time.

Sir G. No ; I wanted to see you alone. Positively, I thought your *tête-à-tête* with Signor Lancia would never end. By the way, is not Lancia the droll fellow who goes through the country boring quiet folks for subscriptions, and persuading romantic ladies to hold fancy fairs for the cause of Italy?

Miss F. Remember, sir, that you speak of my friend. Have you further business with me?

Sir G. Only to persuade you to be amiable, and relent.

Miss F. Relent as to what?

Sir G. As to the regatta ; we should still be in time.

Miss F. Sir Gerard, I declined your offer before ; I trust, civilly.

Sir G. Undeniably.

Miss F. Then don't repeat it; or I may decline uncivilly.

Sir G. But Miss Rochford's wishes——

Miss F. In this case, are not mine.

Sir G. Still——

Miss F. Excuse me ; I have one marked failing—a proneness to be downright. Sometimes I tell people my opinion of them to their faces ; that I may not yield to the temptation now, I prudently withdraw from it. Sir Gerard, good morning. [*She goes out.*]

Sir G. [*Walking to and fro.*] I should have married that woman after all ; her fortune would have been one famous point—her temper another. Plain life's as insipid as plain water ; but every word from her lips would have been a drop of such pure alcohol, that I think I could have relished the draught. [*Sits.*] I fear she'll hardly stand my friend with Evelyn. Can I win the pretty simpleton in spite of her? That might be difficult. Something must be done ; if Morley fulfils his threat, I'm ruined. It's said there's some mystery about the girl's parentage. No matter, if she has money of her own. But has she?—Are there no means by which I could learn?

Re-enter ROCHFORD.

Roch. [*Aside.*] He here ! Evelyn, how to protect thee ?

[*He takes up his portfolio, and collects sketches.*]

Sir G. Who's that ?

Roch. The drawing-master.

Sir G. When the deuce did you come in ?

Roch. Just now, for my portfolio.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] The drawing-master ! He may be the man for my purpose ; I suppose he's often here, and knows something of the family affairs. Your name is—is—

Roch. Vernon.

Sir G. Pardon me, are these sketches yours ?

Roch. They are.

Sir G. Surely I know this place ! Yes, it's Baden-Baden, with its saloon and pleasure-grounds.

Roch. You are right.

Sir G. I thought so. [*Carelessly retaining the sketch.*]
You find Miss Rochford an apt pupil—eh, Mr Vernon ?

Roch. She has much taste.

Sir G. Every gift of mind, person, and fortune.

Roch. Indeed ! Of fortune ?

Sir G. Yes ; you know, of course, that she'll be Miss Fortescue's heiress——

Roch. There's such a report. [*Aside.*] So, he would sound me.

Sir G. Nay, I take a liberty in speaking of it. But as her friend——

Roch. Naturally you feel interested. [*Aside.*] I'll give him full scope.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] The fellow's disposed to gossip. Who could fail to be interested in one so amiable—so——

Roch. So unsuspecting.

Sir G. So charitable.

Roch. To the poor, you mean ?

Sir G. Ay, gives a great deal away, I'm sure.

Roch. I've heard so in Dover.

Sir G. You have ? Excellent young lady ! [*Aside.*]

Then she *has* money of her own. Yes, she quite deserves her brilliant prospects.

Roch. I don't doubt it. Yet brilliant prospects have their dangers.

Sir G. Dangers, Mr Vernon?

Roch. Nay, it's hardly for me——

Sir G. To discuss Miss Rochford's affairs. No, nor for me ; still——

Roch. I meant the danger which attends inexperience.

Sir G. You're standing. [*Points to a chair.* ROCHFORD *sits.*] Yes, I take you.

Roch. The danger, Sir Gerard, that such a prize might fall to one unworthy of it.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] He talks freely, on my soul ! Well, as you've broached the subject, I grant it would be a thousand pities if she became a prey to some designing fellow—say some country clod—without fortune or accomplishments.

Roch. And then, sir, you know there's equal danger on the other hand from men of very particular accomplishments.

Sir G. Ah, the ingratiating dogs !

Roch. Men, Sir Gerard, who, when they have run through one fortune—we'll say on the turf, or at play—have the accomplishment of extracting another fortune from the credulity of their friends.

Sir G. Hem ! you're a bit of a cynic, Mr Vernon. [*Aside.*] Where have I heard that voice ?

Roch. I once knew a London merchant, Sir Gerard, who had been the victim of such a person.

Sir G. A merchant ! [*Aside.*] Morley, perhaps. I'm sure I've seen him before. [*Aloud.*] A merchant, eh ?

Roch. Into whose family this accomplished person gained entrance. First he won the daughter's affection, and then made of it a key to the father's strongbox. Clever fellow ! The one he robbed of money, the other of peace.

Sir G. So.

Roch. Oh, but he had other triumphs. There were honourable women whose hopes he had blighted, for he could feign love for sport, and still keep clear of the law; innocent women whose good name he had stained, for he knew how to boast by hints, and still keep clear of the law. He was so accomplished, you see.

Sir G. Well, sir, what's this to the purpose?

Roch. Nothing, perhaps—the mere habit of an artist to hit off a portrait. By the way, do you recognise it?

Sir G. I?—No! Confound me if I do.

Roch. Not singular, Sir Gerard. I have often produced a striking likeness, which every one knew except the sitter.

Sir G. Wait a moment. Yes, yes; putting this and that together, I fancy you mean me. Do you see this cane?

Roch. It has a gold head. Is it paid for?

Sir G. You know that you are safe, that I cannot punish you without offending Miss Rochford. [*Aside, looking at ROCHFORD keenly, while he collects his sketches.*] Rochford! Rochford! How that name and this man's face carry me back. Can it be? The very voice, too!

Roch. I'll thank you for my sketch.

Sir G. [*Looking at sketch which he has retained.*] Oh, this? your drawing of Baden? [*Aside.*] Baden! all tallies and coheres. [*Aloud.*] You've been at Baden, perhaps?

Roch. I at Baden? Oh yes—yes.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] He hesitates. [*Aloud.*] So have I, years ago. A strange incident happened just then, the arrest of an Englishman for the robbery and murder of his kinsman.

Roch. [*Controlling himself.*] Indeed. Oblige me with my sketch.

Sir G. [*Withdrawing it.*] I saw him on his way to prison in front of this very building. [*Points to sketch.*] I was present at his trial. I have never forgotten that man's face.

[ROCHFORD screens his face with portfolio; SIR GERARD lays his hand upon it; ROCHFORD screens his face with a sketch.]

Roch. No doubt it would strike you. The sketch!

Sir G. You're in haste, sir. He was convicted of robbery, and imprisoned for life.

Roch. Oh, only of robbery.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] Clever rascal! [*Aloud.*] As to the murder, there were some faint suspicions against others, and his judges were squeamish.

Roch. Merciful, perhaps. But I am pressed.

[*Holding out his hand for sketch.*]

Sir G. [*Still withholding it.*] I am not; and I have a fancy for you to hear me out. My belief is, that this convict escaped, that he came to England, that I've seen him here. [*Surveying ROCHFORD.*] His height about—about yours—his hair, iron grey—his age, perhaps still under fifty—his manner, caustic and insolent—his profession, an artist's. You see I too can hit off a portrait. Is it like?

Roch. How can I tell? show me the original.

Sir G. I thought so; the sitter, you said, seldom knows himself. You're a capital actor, though.

Roch. [*Trying to laugh him down.*] But you are not. Is this your clumsy revenge because I've just humbled you? Away, sir! [*Going.*]

Sir G. Stay, Rochford!

Roch. Rochford!

Sir G. Ay, Rochford. I will see if others recognise my portrait of you; I will take it at once to your pupil, Miss Rochford.

Roch. [*With uncontrollable emotion.*] To Evelyn? Oh no! no, no, no!

Sir G. Evelyn—you call her Evelyn? Evelyn Rochford—your own name, too! Then the mystery of her parentage—your agitation—ah! there's more in this. Yes, to Evelyn Rochford! [*Going.*]

Roch. No, not to her—not to her!

Sir G. Why not?

Roch. Because—because——

Sir G. I'll tell you why : because you are her kinsman ; a near one—too old for her brother—her father !

Roch. Her father !

Sir G. Yes ; that word Evelyn from your lips, and your excitement, have betrayed you.

Roch. Wretched man ! I depend for bread on my art, and you would ruin me with a patron ; this explains all.

Sir G. Not to me. [*A short pause.*] Yet listen ; there is one way, perhaps, by which you might escape exposure.

Roch. Exposure !

Sir G. What you please. I doubt not that you are Rochford, the convict, Evelyn's father ; yet for her sake——

Roch. Well ?

Sir G. I might spare you ; but mark me, there's an *if*.

Roch. If what ?

Sir G. Can't you guess ?

Roch. No.

Sir G. I must help you, then—I love Evelyn.

Roch. [*Restraining himself.*] Go on——

Sir G. I would marry her ; but—pshaw ! why be nice with you ? My affairs are desperate ; I must marry a fortune.

Roch. Go on.

Sir G. You can help me.

Roch. No ; she would spurn you.

Sir G. In that distressing event you can still help me.

Roch. How ?

Sir G. Confide to her privately who you are. Tell her that I know your secret—that for your sake and her own she must be mine ; and bring me, too, an ample dowry from her protectress.

Roch. So, that's my task ?

Sir G. Comply, and you are safe.

Roch. Villain, coward ! Oh, words are poor ! This to me !

Sir G. Then you are her father ?

Roch. Who said that ?

Sir G. Your own passion again. Why else should you——

Roch. Why else? Because I have that of which you have but the forged semblance—manhood. Because I loathe baseness, revere innocence, and would protect it. Her father! Why, were I the convict you spoke of, I should scorn you still. Passion may drive the wretched even to blood—want, to plunder; and amidst the wreck of hope and virtue they may still be men; but you, who would force a child's heart through a father's agony—who would extort the marriage-vow itself by the rack—the chained felon would pollute his hand by the touch of yours. Begone, I defy you!

Sir G. [*Aside.*] He must be Rochford! yet I may fail to prove it. Good morning; you'll be sane to-morrow. Till then, I'll keep your secret. [*He goes out.*]

Roch. Discovered, and by him! Oh, I have been rash; but the thought of Evelyn transported me. No hope of his mercy—none! What's to be done? he will belie me to her. She must be warned too of his machinations. How? There's but one course—I must be beforehand with him, and reveal myself. Yet how prove my innocence? No matter; I must trust to nature's instinct, and to Him who is the father's Father! Yes, Evelyn; thou shalt know me to-morrow! [*Sinks into chair.*]

ACT III., SCENE I.

Grounds in front of MISS FORTESCUE'S house.

Enter SIR GERARD.

Sir G. So, he's with her now in that very room. He still gives me the answer of yesterday; bids me, in fact, do my worst. Though I could almost swear to his face and voice—though his passion and alarm witness that he is Rochford, and show his relationship to Evelyn, how can I prove this? Were he once identified, all would go well.

I should at least checkmate young Brackenbury—if he be my rival. What's my policy, then? Decision; I'll act as if I had proof, and warn the Brackenburys. Rochford's emotion may again betray him. They'll keep his secret, I think; if so, its further disclosure would rest with me. Yes, I should be master of the situation. Who comes here? Oh, our friend of Italy, our clever patriot, who levies funds for his country, and makes himself the treasurer; a good notion that! Why won't England become an oppressed nationality, and give a poor devil a chance?

Enter LANCIA.

Good morning, my honest patriot.

Lan. You recal me, then, sir?

Sir G. Yes, my sublime virtue. I had once the honour in a crowd of rubbing against your immaculate shoulders.

Lan. You should have told me, Sir Gerard, that I might have brushed my coat.

Sir G. How; you speak thus, and know me?

Lan. Yes; or why should I speak so? You were pointed out to me yesterday; besides, I have seen you at Baden. *[Going.]*

Sir G. What, at Baden? That's fifteen years since.

Lan. Very likely.

Sir G. Wait, wait!

Lan. Well, sir?

Sir G. *[Forcibly taking his arm.]* Yes, just fifteen years since. The very time, you may remember, when an Englishman named Rochford was arrested.

Lan. I remember well—charged with robbery and murder?

Sir G. That's the villain.

Lan. I heard of him.

Sir G. You never saw the man.

Lan. *[Carelessly.]* Yes, yes, I have seen him.

Sir G. Often?

Lan. Several times.

Sir G. Lancia, I can help your fortunes—I mean, of course, your country's.

Lan. How?

Sir G. Could you identify this Rochford if you saw him?

Lan. I can't say; possibly. Why?

Sir G. Of course you detest his crimes?

Lan. [After a short pause.] Sir! am I a gentleman?

Sir G. Suppose this criminal had escaped.

Lan. Escaped!

Sir G. Would you help to bring him to justice?

Lan. I would, I would!

Sir G. He has escaped; I can confront you with him.

Lan. You can? Do so then. Yes, by all means; but quickly; I sail to-night for Calais.

Sir G. You have the best of the day before you; [Looking off.] Ah, Miss Fortescue! We must break off; not a word of what has passed! Meet me in half an hour at the inn by the lodge.

Lan. And you'll tell me how this will serve my country?

Sir G. Yes, yes! Remember; in half an hour. [Aside.] Now, Rochford. [He goes out.]

Enter MISS FORTESCUE.

Miss F. What! you, Lancia? I scarcely hoped to see you again, at present. Was that Sir Gerard Fane who left you?

Lan. Yes, dear lady; but talk not of him. I've just had glorious news, and flew back to tell it.

Miss F. Indeed.

Lan. Yes; two battles have been fought, and the enemy decisively routed. Lombardy is free—my dear native Lombardy!

Miss F. News to stir one's blood; how glad I am! How glad Evelyn Rochford will be!

Lan. [Musingly.] Evelyn Rochford—Rochford!

Miss F. Is that strange?

Lan. Oh no, no ! I have reason to dwell upon her name.

Miss F. Because, like me, she loves Italy. Well, good friend, your cause is half won. Oh, were I but a man, I would help you—not with gold, but with steel !

Lan. Don't I know it ? Lady, if in going back to my land I feel one struggle, one pang, it is that I—that I leave—— [*Pausing in emotion.*] Oh, I am much foolish !

Miss F. But you will return ; you promised.

Lan. That is with Heaven. I have but given Italy my toil ; she may need my blood.

Miss F. [*Touched.*] Then this may be a last farewell—a farewell to the friend I most honoured ; to the true heart that beat but for a noble cause.

Lan. And who was it that cheered me ? Who, when men laughed at me for a dreamer, said, “ Courage, Lancia ; better to live in noble dreams than in base realities ” ? Whose heart and hand were ever open to the poor exile ? [*Much moved.*] Ah, lady, forgive the tongue that at parting falters with gratitude, devotion—love !

Miss F. [*Surprised.*] Lancia !

Lan. The signora understands me—love for a sister. Would I had such. And now adieu.

[*Takes her hand.*]

Miss F. Adieu, dear friend. May your lot be happy as your heart is noble ! May you find friends—brothers ; even the sister you need !

Lan. Never shall I.

Miss F. Except you make one.

Lan. How ?

Miss F. As others do—by a wedding ring.

Lan. Marry !—I shall not. If I could live three lives, I would not. Farewell, signora. [*Kissing her hand, then aside.*] Marry, Lancia ! Never, never ! [*He goes out.*]

Miss F. So he's gone ! Brave, high-hearted gentleman, who bore want with a smile, and lived but for his country ; who never flattered me because I was rich, nor presumed because I was gracious. True, staunch friend, I shall

miss thee. How pure was his gratitude! He loved me as a sister. Had he breathed a warmer love, should I have shrunk from it? What, Helen Fortescue, this folly at your age? [*Smiling, but a good deal moved.*]

Enter SERVANT.

Ser. Mr Brackenbury and Mr Gilbert have called.

Miss F. Very well; say I'll come instantly. [*SERVANT goes out.*] There, it's over. [*Wiping her eyes.*] Go, good Lancia; Heaven prosper you, and let me thank it that I have seen one man from whom I was sorry to part!

[*She goes out.*]

SCENE II.

Library in MISS FORTESCUE'S house.

ROCHFORD and EVELYN discovered. *Drawing on an easel, palette, brushes, &c.* EVELYN is engaged on her drawing; ROCHFORD stands near and observes her. *A short silence; the clock strikes one.*

Eve. One o'clock! Then I may lay down my pencil; our lesson for the day is over.

Roch. Be it so, then; we continue to-morrow?

Eve. Yes.

Roch. [*Aside.*] Now is the time.

Eve. [*Showing her drawing.*] Well, Mr Vernon, have you any hope of your pupil?

Roch. Yes, you have taste and freedom, but—— [*Turning away, aside.*] How to reveal myself.

Eve. I know what you will say, I need care and patience.

Roch. The subject may not please you; shall we choose another? [*Looking through his portfolio.*]

Eve. No, no; you will spoil me by indulgence.

Roch. [*Taking up a sketch.*] Here is a simpler one for to-morrow, and here—— [*Taking up a second sketch.*] Ah! 'tis the very sketch.

Eve. That I should like, you think?

[*Approaching him.*

Roch. No; the one that startled you yesterday—that of the prison-cell.

Eve. Prison-cell! Oh yes. [*Eagerly.*] The sketch that led to your story.

Roch. That reminds me. I promised you to conclude it.

Eve. I have not forgotten; will you do so now?

Roch. If you desire it.

Eve. Of course I do. [*Sits.*] There, I'm all attention.

Roch. [*Aside.*] A few minutes, and she knows all. [*Sinks into a chair, then slowly turns to her.*] I must premise that the story is a sad one.

Eve. But it's only fiction.

Roch. Nay, partly taken from life.

Eve. Then the more interesting.

Roch. I told you that it concerned a father and a daughter.

Eve. [*Gravely.*] You did. Begin with the lady; she was beautiful, of course?

Roch. In his eyes.

Eve. He was a fond parent, then?

Roch. He was.

Eve. And she loved him?

Roch. As my tale goes, they had been severed from her childhood.

Eve. By what cause?

Roch. That's the point of the story. Her father was accused of crime—of the robber's crime; it was even said of the assassin's.

Eve. What a painful interest! Proceed.

Roch. The proofs were strong against him.

Eve. Was he guilty?

Roch. No; a thousand times no! but the law pronounced him so; yet, as there were faint doubts in his favour, his doom was the prison, not the scaffold.

Eve. A hard fate, if innocent.

Roch. Ay ; cut off from his kind—from esteem—from love—from his friends—from his child !

Eve. Yes, his child ! did he see her no more ?

Roch. See her ? [*With forced cheerfulness.*] Oh yes, yes ; in the story I bring it about that he does see her, but fears to reveal himself.

Eve. Why ?

Roch. Lest she should believe him guilty.

Eve. But she was his child.

Roch. Well ?

Eve. She would not have believed it. Spite of the dye on his hand, the chain on his limbs, the scorn of all men, she would have clung to him—she was his child.

Roch. [*Aside.*] Bless her, bless her ! Is there no case, then, when a child will renounce a father ?

Eve. [*Aside, much moved.*] My father broke my mother's heart. Yes, there are such cases. [*Controlling herself.*] But one thing strikes me ; you have never mentioned his wife.

Roch. [*Agitated.*] Spare me there ; she was a dear, dear, dear friend ! Return to the husband.

Eve. Still the tenant of a dungeon ?

Roch. Yes ; but even there men's natures will show themselves. In time he came to be trusted, as a convict might be, with the oversight of his fellows. After some years a fire broke out in the prison. All was panic ? For safety, the convicts were hurried into the prison-yard. They would have seized the chance to escape even by bloodshed. The counsels of this man restrained some, his firmness others ; he stood by the gate, fixed as its own stanchions. He raised the alarm, though fierce hands were at his throat, and wild faces, lurid beneath the flames, were gleaming on his own.

Eve. But help came ?

Roch. Yes, in time ; the flames were subdued, nor was

the man's service forgotten ; in two years more an order came for his release.

Eve. His innocence discovered ?

Roch. No, though perhaps surmised.

Eve. Then he still went forth with a stained name ?

Roch. He did : and the thought might have crushed him, but for another.

Eve. I guess it—it was the thought of his child ?

Roch. It was.

Eve. He went to her ?

Roch. Ay ; once released, he set forth in her quest ; for many lands and the sea were between them. Penniless, at times he begged his way, nor felt it shame. One day he toiled with the peasants for bread ; the next, he gained a pittance by his art. Often, half famished, he made his bed beneath a hovel, or on the bare ground. The very elements seemed leagued against his single heart, but he still bore on. Want and toil, wind and rain, spent their force on him in vain. His life was charmed—a flame that hunger could not exhaust, nor cold chill, nor storm quench ; it was fed by Heaven, it was love for his child !

Eve. Well, he found her ! And her mother ?

Roch. He found her ; the mother——

Eve. Still lived ?

Roch. [*Greatly moved.*] In his memory—in his heart ; but on earth—no more—no more !

Eve. This relation pains you. Proceed no further.

Roch. I must ! I can command myself ; can you ?

Eve. Surely, if you can.

Roch. But there is more pain to follow—perhaps a shock.

Eve. [*Slightly alarmed.*] To whom ?

Roch. Prepare yourself ; be calm, I entreat.

Eve. Calm ! What mystery is this ? [*Both rise.*]

Roch. I am about to end it. Oh, restrain yourself ! for that lonely mourner—that bereaved husband——

Eve. [*Gasping.*] Well ?

Roch. Is the man before you !

Eve. [*Retreating.*] You terrify me. Why these confessions to a stranger?

Roch. A stranger! How if through me your father spoke?

Eve. I have no father.

Roch. Have you proof of that?

Eve. [*Trembling.*] Silence! don't tell me that he lives?

Roch. Not tell you?

Eve. Not of him who broke my mother's heart!

Roch. They are perjured who told you so. Your mother loved him—trusted him to the last. Here are my vouchers, her own letters to him.

[*Produces and gives letters.*]

Eve. Her very hand!

[*Totters to a chair.*]

Roch. Evelyn!

Eve. Evelyn!

Roch. Yes, Evelyn, mine by the right of love, of nature! Ah, do you not yet see it? I—I am Rochford!

Eve. And my father! No, no, unsay those fearful words! [*After a pause.*] Your proofs?

Roch. [*Pointing to letters.*] Those letters; where could I have obtained them, but from your mother? Besides, many still know me. [*She shrinks.*] Ay, shrink. I see—I see.

[*He weeps.*]

Eve. [*Aside.*] Tears! they are not feigned. It is true. Pity me, sir! if you are indeed my father, think what I must feel as—

Roch. The child of a convict. I do; and since you recoil from me, I'll not torture you. I'll quit you for ever!

Eve. Stay.

Roch. Well?

Eve. You said you were innocent.—Prove it.

Roch. I cannot. The proofs made against me. What can I say? Evelyn, crime leaves its stamp on the face; look on mine. Crime blunts the heart; is mine hardened? Have you no instinct that pleads for me? Evelyn, I implore—

[*He is about to kneel.*]

Eve. [*Starting up.*] Oh, do not kneel, sir—not to me!

Roch. Right! I will not. When under a felon's ban,

your mother acquitted me. The man whom she trusted should not kneel. Pure in her sight and Heaven's, I stand erect. Dare I invoke her memory and meet your eye, unshrinking, if I were not innocent? Ah, that look! speak—answer!

Eve. Innocent, I believe it, innocent! Father!

[*Throws herself into his arms.*]

Roch. [*Embracing her.*] Father! Close! close! I have thee—my own—my own!

Eve. Ay—yours! [*They stand hand in hand.*]

Roch. Let me gaze—gaze. How have I dreamed of this! No dream now! This hand is warm—firm. I have seen thee in sleep; but the dawn was cruel. Now I shall not dread the sun. I shall wake and have thee. Oh moment that repays a life!

Eve. I know you now.

Roch. You might never have known me but for the threat of a villain.

Eve. Who?

Roch. Sir Gerard Fane! He guesses my secret, and would force you to marry him.

Eve. Marry him! I am already betrothed.

Roch. Betrothed!

Eve. To Gilbert Brackenbury, the son of a neighbour.

Roch. And you love him?

Eve. Love him? Yes.

Roch. Thank Heaven, she is safe!

Enter MISS FORTESCUE, BRACKENBURY, and GILBERT.

Miss F. What is this, Evelyn,—your hand in this gentleman's?

Brack. Why, that almost gives colour to the statement.

Eve. What statement.

Brack. Sir Gerard Fane's; he has been with me, and declares that this person calling himself Vernon——

Roch. Go on, sir.

Brack. I must state the charge, that you may refute it.

He asserts that the so-called Vernon is no other than an escaped convict ; and moreover——

Gil. [*Interrupting.*] Do not tell her that ; it's false—monstrous !

Miss F. Yet she must hear it, Gilbert. Evelyn, Sir Gerard dares to assert that Mr Vernon is—— [*Hesitates.*

Eve. I know it already ; the gentleman is my father.

Brack. She admits it.

Miss F. No. I demand his proofs.

Eve. They will convince you.

Miss F. Child, dear child, and if he were your father, can you guess——

Roch. Madam, she knows all—that I am a man with a branded name, but still innocent.

Gil. [*To BRACKENBURY.*] Perhaps so ; it is at least possible.

Brack. [*To GILBERT.*] Silence, sir. [*To ROCHFORD.*] You grant, then, that your name is tainted ; and you, Miss Rochford, you acknowledge this man ?

Eve. I acknowledge him.

Brack. Then I must tell you, with deep concern, that you can never be the wife of my son.

Roch. Ah, let me speak !

Brack. No ; it matters not whether you are guilty ; you have been pronounced so. My son shall never be connected with a reputed felon.

Eve. [*Indignantly.*] Felon !—Father !

Roch. Patience, love ; no anger, no anger. [*To BRACKENBURY.*] I can respect your feelings, sir, being myself a father ; still, you will grant she should not suffer. Listen, then, I'll not shame her. [*BRACKENBURY makes a gesture of repulse.*] I'll quit this spot ; visit her as a stranger, in private, and seldom—seldom. I am quite reasonable.

Miss F. [*Aside.*] Can this man be guilty ?

Brack. Words are idle. Gilbert ! [*Going.*

Gil. Stay, sir ; whatever her father's faults, they cannot affect Evelyn.

Brack. Not affect her?

Gil. No. Do we deal thus in meaner things? does the gold-seeker reject his prize, because encumbered with earth? Evelyn, I know your worth; if it came not through a father, then Heaven gave it you direct. Be mine for what you are—the dearer for your sorrow.

[*Advances to her, and seizes her hand.*]

Eve. Gilbert!

Brack. Am I in my senses? Will you bring infamy upon your name?

Gil. No, sir, I will maintain it. Remember that sailor of our name—you have told me the tale often—who was hemmed in by the foe; their guns had swept down his comrades—battered his ship from stem to stern. “Strike your flag!” was the word: he refused. “But your ship sinks!” they cried. “And I with it!” he answered, and went down. What’s a man’s ship to his betrothed? If fate wreck Evelyn, it wrecks me with her.

Brack. But not you alone; your father—the weak fool who was proud of you, schemed for you, pinched for you—he is your victim! Persist, and you lose me; you shall be an outcast from my heart and my memory!

Eve. Go, Gilbert; I implore—I command you!

Miss F. Gilbert, obey her—obey your father—go!

Gil. Only for a time, then; I’ll not yield her.

Miss F. Silence—silence! Evelyn!

Eve. Do not speak—leave us.

Miss F. [*To BRACKENBURY.*] Come, sir, I feel for you; we will talk of this together.

[*MISS FORTESCUE, BRACKENBURY, and GILBERT go out.*]

Roch. [*Approaching her.*] Evelyn! [*She stands absorbed.*]
Evelyn!

Eve. [*Abstractedly.*] Ah! yes, yes!

Roch. Not a look! I should have foreseen this; I have undone her!

Eve. [*Rousing herself.*] No—no, father! do not heed his taunts—sit—sit! [*She forces him into a chair, and*

kneels by his side.] Ah! lay your hand on my head; thus—that's well. I know what you must have borne; I will be your comfort, father. We will have one home—one lot; we shall be so happy! You see I can smile already. But for this trial, I had never guessed the half of Gilbert's love; and though I lose him, still that thought—yes—though I lose him—don't heed me—don't heed me!

[She bursts into hysterical weeping.

Roch. My child!

ACT IV., SCENE I.

*Grounds in front of MISS FORTESCUE'S house
(as in Act III.)*

Enter MISS FORTESCUE and ROCHFORD.

Miss F. Yes, I admit the evidence is sufficient. These letters in the hand of your wife, who was my dearest friend, and your other proofs, convince me.

[She hands him the letters.

Roch. You grant then that I am Rochford, Evelyn's father?

Miss F. I cannot doubt it; and I will add, that strong as circumstances seemed against you, I would fain believe in your innocence. But is there no way still left to prove it.

Roch. None, save the confession of the real criminal.

Miss F. But those jewels which were sold. What became of the money you received for them, and which you were charged with appropriating?

Roch. It was paid to a certain Count Manoli by my uncle, for a debt at play.

Miss F. And where is this Count Manoli? He might throw some light on the affair.

Roch. Yes, he might.

Miss F. Has due search been made for him ?

Roch. For years ; but in vain.

Miss F. [*Aside.*] Poor Evelyn ! Who approaches ? Sir Gerard Fane !—Rochford, Mr Brackenbury will never consent to his son's marriage with Evelyn.

Roch. I know it.

Miss F. But for her sake he has promised me to keep your secret. You must do the same. Put Sir Gerard to the proof. As you value Evelyn's honour, never admit to him that you are Rochford, or that—— [*She hesitates.*]

Roch. Or that I am her father. True ; she must be spared that.

Miss F. Forgive me.

Roch. Freely. I know my part.

Enter SIR GERARD.

Sir G. Once more, Miss Fortescue, your very humble servant. Am I welcome ?

Miss F. That depends upon your business. If it be to confess your slanders to this gentleman, and entreat his pardon—yes.

Sir G. So it's to be war, I find ; very well—you mean then to dispute my charges ?

Roch. I do ! and defy you to the proof !

Sir G. Bravely said, Rochford ! How well you're looking—how free from anxiety ; how safe and comfortable you must feel !

Roch. If you mean me by Rochford, I am safe. A man's character may be known by his enemies ; mine is, Sir Gerard Fane.

Miss F. True, Mr Vernon ; but even malice itself should have some slight pretext. Are you sure, after all, that we don't wrong this man ?

Roch. Wrong him.

Miss F. Yes ; are such delusions the fruit of a sane mind ? [*Speaking in a lower tone, but so as to be heard by*

SIR GERARD.] I have just heard that he has had frightful losses on the turf—ruinous losses. It may be that the trouble has gone there. [Touching her forehead.

Roch. To his brain? It may be so.

Sir G. Miss Fortescue!

Miss F. [Soothingly.] Yes, Sir Gerard.

Sir G. Give me leave to say how thoroughly I admire you. You play a desperate game with a desperate spirit. It's almost a sensation to be matched against you. You insist on my proofs, then? Reflect, Rochford; the facts are not yet made public. You know my terms for silence.

Miss F. What terms, Mr Vernon?

Roch. [Forcing a laugh.] Modest ones. I believe, madam, that you should give him your *protégée*, Miss Rochford, in marriage?

Sir G. Ay, or at least a compensation from the loss of her, which, in gallantry to so fair a lady, I must of course rate highly.

Miss F. Unfortunate man! His malady is past doubt.

Sir G. That's right—fortify, fortify—throw up your works! But in modern tactics the besieger has generally the advantage; he can attack, you see, from an unexpected point. I shall be really sorry to demolish such ingenious defences, especially with a lady in the garrison; but I must throw in a shell since you force me. I must indeed. [Aside, going.] Where can Lancia be? He swore not to fail me. [To MISS FORTESCUE.] *Au revoir*, my fair enemy: *au revoir*! [He goes out.

Roch. He has some proof, then?

Miss F. I think not; his vaunts may be the disguise of his weakness.

Roch. No; that look of wicked triumph was not feigned; and the shame will fall upon Evelyn.

Miss F. Come to the house; she will miss you.

Roch. Miss me! you think so? Miss me!

Miss F. Rochford, nerve yourself for her sake.

Roch. I shall not fail; but the heart must have way.

It is because I would be strong with her that I am weak now. *[They go out.]*

SCENE II.

The Drawing-room (as in Act II.)

Enter EVELYN and GILBERT.

Eve. Gilbert, dear Gilbert, I cannot bear this; the struggle rends me. Have pity—say farewell!

[Throws herself into a chair; he sits by her side.]

Gil. And if that word must come, should your lips hurry it? Ah, you cannot guess how I have loved you! Fool that I was to ape a heartless fashion, and feign indifference.

Eve. And mad that I was to doubt you—to wound you with my jealous caprices. Ah, Gilbert, the truth breaks upon us now!

Gil. Yes; as the dawn upon the doomed man. But why should we bear a fate so wretched, so undeserved? When we exchanged our vows, from that moment we were one—one no less than if we had knelt at the altar. Evelyn, I will not yield you! already my wife at heart, be so in name. Do not—do not reject me!

Enter ROCHFORD and MISS FORTESCUE, unobserved.

Eve. Gilbert, your father's command. Do you think I would bring upon you his curse?

Gil. What does he demand of me? That I should be false to honour, no less than love—that I should desert you in your sorrow?

Eve. Remember his pride in you—his love.

Gil. In aught else I would obey him.

Eve. Make his case yours, Gilbert. My father is innocent; I know it; but men say otherwise. Could I force upon your father a union which he would deem shame? Oh, never!—I have said it—never!

Gil. So stern, Evelyn?

Eve. Stern! Do *I* not feel? Must I not henceforth travel with weary feet through the gloom whose sole light is memory? Yes, my beloved, the memory of you!

[*Faltering.*

Gil. Ah, you relent!

[*Kneeling.*

Eve. No; you would not ask it. Think of a parent's claim—a parent's—to whom we owe life—love—nurture—of whose being ours is a part. Help me, Gilbert, help me to do right. If you honour me, do not tempt me.

Gil. Evelyn, you have conquered; I resign you.

Eve. Now then, while we have strength. Stay not at my feet. Bless you, and farewell!

[*He kisses her hand passionately, and rises.*

Enter BRACKENBURY.

Brack. I suspected this. So Gilbert, I have sought for you.

Gil. You should have been earlier, sir: you would then have heard Evelyn reject me at your command. You have triumphed, father—sundered us for ever.

[*He goes out.*

Brack. Young lady, you have done well. My honour—the honour of an old name, is all my wealth, and you have spared it. I thank you.

Roch. Yes, Evelyn, you have done well. [*He takes both her hands, and gazes on her intently.*] Nay, droop not. This sorrow will pass; your father says it. Retire awhile, my own. I have business here.

Eve. [*Looking at him earnestly.*] You will not leave me?

Roch. [*After a short pause.*] Leave thee—why ask?

Eve. There is something in your very look like——

[*Pauses.*

Roch. Like what?

Eve. Like a farewell.

Roch. [*Aside.*] Strange instinct! [*Aloud.*] Your mind

has been overstrained. You need rest. Go, sweet. [*She is going.*] Once more, Evelyn, to my heart—to my heart ! Courage, my girl. [*They embrace.*] There is a Providence. Go—go !

[*She goes out, ROCHFORD leading her to door, and following her with his eyes ; then returning, he sits a little apart.*

Miss F. Now, Mr Brackenbury, you are content, I hope. Gilbert has obeyed you.

Brack. If he hadn't, I would have disowned him. I wouldn't have left him one of my family portraits.

Miss F. Well, they'll hardly bring him a fortune. Spoiled canvas fetches little at the auction-rooms.

Brack. How, madam ! my son sell his ancestors !—sell the Brackenburys and the O'Kilmacows !

Miss F. What else can he do ? Your annuity, I believe, dies with you.

Brack. True, true ; the poor fellow will indeed have to rough it.

Miss F. My dowry to Evelyn would have been a small provision for him.

Brack. What ! Miss Fortescue, would you bribe me to my dishonour ?

Miss F. No, but I would lessen your pain in doing an act of justice.

Brack. Justice ?

Miss F. [*Coaxingly.*] Ah, neighbour, let them marry ; what's your name worth if it won't carry them through ? Should the world look a little shyly on Evelyn, you have your answer—she married a Brackenbury ; that silences everything.

Brack. No, madam, not even that answer would avail against such facts.

Miss F. But the facts are not known. Sir Gerard cannot prove Rochford's identity, or that he is Evelyn's father.

Brack. But I should know it. He would come into Evelyn's presence, sit at my son's table ; some day he

would betray himself. No, with such perils, with Rochford in the same neighbourhood, in the same land—what you ask is impossible ; I will never yield.

Roch. [*Advancing.*] One word, sir : would your resolution be changed, if what report once gave out were true—if this Rochford, whom you so loathe, were indeed dead ?

Brack. Dead ! This is mockery.

Roch. But answer ; in that case ?

Brack. In that impossible case, I might yield.

Roch. Then count me dead—dead to my country—dead to Evelyn. I will depart at once to Australia—pledge myself never to return—never, while you forbid it, to see my child, or even to hear from her. I will be as lost to her as if her foot were on my grave !

Miss F. What ! could you really tear yourself from your Evelyn ?

Roch. Yes ; to her, mine is but a new tie—a loose creeper round her life : rend it, the tree will flourish ; but her love—the branch grafted on herself—if you blight that, you blight the root that bears it.

Miss F. This is a noble, a fearful sacrifice ; and yet you are right. [*To BRACKENBURY.*] You hear him, sir ?

Brack. I hear his proposal.

Miss F. What do you require ?

Brack. Security that he will keep it.

Roch. Security ! I am poor, and must live by toil. I am already suspected ; who would employ the discovered convict ? Say then, should I be so mad as to return ?—should I court starvation and infamy—infamy that would wreck my child ?

Miss F. He would not.

Roch. [*To BRACKENBURY.*] You do not refuse. Ah think ! the fate of two human beings is on your breath. You have given one life ; give him—give her, the heart's life ; give them back Nature's own right—the rich man's crown, the poor man's riches—the right to love. They will bless you all your days—bless you when earth takes to her bosom your proud name, and my stained name—

when we two have passed where all ranks are level, and all hearts open. No ; you will not refuse me !

[*Clasps his hands imploringly, BRACKENBURY slowly turns away.*]

Miss F. And if he do, I will keep no terms with him ; I will myself persuade Evelyn to marry Gilbert.

Brack. No need, madam ; for my son's sake, I accept this compact ; I consent.

Miss F. Ah, neighbour, I knew——

Brack. Not a word—not a word—the struggle is over ; but it has been sharp. I would be alone. [*He goes out.*]

Miss F. Rochford ! from this moment I believe you innocent.

[*Gives him her hand, which he presses in silent emotion.*]

Roch. Now to fulfil my compact. I depart at once.

Miss F. At once ! you will first see Evelyn ?

Roch. See her ! no, that would indeed unman me. I will but write a brief farewell, which you will give her when—when I am gone.

Miss F. Must this indeed be ?

Roch. It must—you felt that it must. I will now retire to the library. [*Going, and looking off.*] Ah ! who passes ?

Miss F. [*Looking from window.*] Sir Gerard Fane, and—can I believe it ?—Lancia !

Roch. Lancia !

Miss F. Why this emotion ?

Roch. 'Tis nothing—the mere trick of my brain, which still conjures up the past. I will write my letter, and rejoin you. [*He goes out.*]

Miss F. What can have brought Lancia back, and in company with Sir Gerard ? So ; he's here to answer.

Enter LANCIA.

Here again, Lancia ?

Lan. Yes, for two motives. First, let me tell you, I have been to Dover. There a telegram reached me. I

am restored to my estates and honours—recalled by the king.

Miss F. [*Shaking hands with him.*] Joy upon joy !

Lan. Ay, joy that would be perfect, but that it lacks one thing.

Miss F. What ?

Lan. A little word, a single word ; but it may echo through a life. You know that my cause triumphs, and that the world, as you say, claps hands.

Miss F. Ay, for liberty.

Lan. For liberty ? For success. Ah, dear lady ! liberty, when it struggles, is like your London Lord Mayor when on foot. No one knows him—the crowd—what is your word—jostles—ay, jostles him roughly ; but liberty successful !—ah, that is my Lord Mayor in his glass coach, when the whole street follows him with shouts.

Miss F. Nay, Lancia, there are exceptions.

Lan. Yes. Do I forget who honoured the right in misfortune, whose goodness dropped a seed into my heart that quickened and sprung there ? Day by day it struck deeper—grew, budded. I guessed not its name. I called it gratitude. At last, in one parting moment, in a rain of grief, it burst into flower. It was love—love for you !

Miss F. I remember—as a sister !

Lan. No ; love above all other. But, poor and banished, could I offer you my hard lot ? That lot is changed. Now I can speak ; if with fear, still with honour. Dear friend—friend of the exile—I love you !

Miss F. Lancia. [*Aside.*] How like him !

Lan. Now for that little word. May I hope ?

Miss F. Do not ask me. I have cares to-day ; cares for others, that would almost make my happiness a sin.

Lan. [*With delight.*] Your happiness. Then——

Miss F. Once more, dear friend, urge me not now. What was that second motive for your return ?

Lan. To do what you will approve—an act of justice.

Miss F. Indeed ! [*Aside.*] I hear Rochford's step. Lancia, we are interrupted. Leave me for the present.

Lan. For the present ; but for the present.

[*Kisses her hand ; he goes out.*]

Enter ROCHFORD with letter.

Roch. Here is the letter. [*Giving it.*] Give it when I am past recal.

Miss F. About to go ! Can this be real ? Rochford, you will write to me from whatever port you embark. You will write, I say ?

Roch. [*Abstractedly.*] Yes ; 'twas there we sat when I first hinted my story to her. How often will she sit there, and the very sunlight fall as now. Others will see her—others— Is this my firmness ? [*Taking his hat.*] Farewell, generous woman. You, who have been a parent to my child, take the blessing of the parent who quits her.

[*Takes MISS FORTESCUE'S hand, then slowly advances to window.*]

Enter EVELYN.

Eve. My father ? Ah, you are here.

[*Clinging to him.* *MISS FORTESCUE conceals the letter.*]

Roch. [*Tenderly.*] My Evelyn, what brings you ?

Eve. A fear that I cannot master—fear to lose you.

Roch. Why this fear ?

Eve. I know not ; but it pursues me everywhere, haunts even my dreams.

Roch. Your dreams, my child ?

Eve. Ay ; but vivid as realities. Listen. 'Tis said sleep visits but the happy. Oh, false ! Wretched, and worn out, I sought my chamber ; stupor fell on me, and I slept. Father, I dreamed that we stood together as now. Suddenly the earth divided at our feet. We were severed ; at first by a narrow line ; then it widened—widened to a gulf, and a sea rolled between us. Still it spread. Soon I saw you but dimly. I called to you, but in vain. Then all was mist, and I lost you—lost you !

Roch. [*Aside.*] And she loves me thus ! [*To EVELYN.*] Nay, it was but a dream.

Eve. You will not leave me ?

Roch. Am I not here ?

Eve. You will always be mine ?

Roch. Thine ! ay. Not closer light to the eye or blood to the heart. Thine ! yes ; were that wild dream true—did the yawning earth—the seas which it were death to tempt—did death itself divide us—love dies not ; I should still be thine !

Sir G. [*At window.*] This way, gentlemen ; follow, follow.

Roch. [*Observing him, and starting.*] Ah !

Sir G. [*Aside as he enters.*] All is well ; Lancia is wonderfully keen in this business.

Miss F. You make free with my house, sir.

Sir G. Naturally, being an enemy's post. [*To ROCHFORD.*] What, she in your arms, and you not her father ?

Roch. And were I, should you not tremble ?

Enter BRACKENBURY, LANCIA, and GILBERT.

Sir G. A threat ! then I open fire. [*All come forward.*] Signor Lancia, permit me—an old acquaintance.

[*Presents him to ROCHFORD.*]

Roch. That face again !

[*He and LANCIA gaze at each other in silence.*]

Sir G. You recognise him ?

Lan. I could think so.

Roch. Have I not met you before ? Ay, often, at Baden. Lancia ! have you borne no other name ?

Lan. What other ?

Roch. Manoli ?—the Count Manoli ?

Lan. You are right.

Miss F. The Count Manoli !

Lan. Yes, the name which I now resume ; and you, who thus remember me, must be Rochford.

Sir G. [*To ROCHFORD.*] A slight error in tactics. [*To*

LANCIA.] You identify him, then. Come, the truth—the whole truth.

Roch. [To LANCIA.] You may remember, then, my companion named Langley?

Lan. He who was murdered?

Roch. The same; on the very night of his murder he paid you, for a debt at play, about sixty napoleons.

Lan. I have not forgotten it.

Roch. That sum was the produce of jewels which he had sold.

Lan. Yes; so Langley told me.

Roch. He did; you could have proved that, but you had fled.

Lan. True; I had political secrets; the police were on my track.

Roch. I had myself received the price of those jewels—was called to account for it; my story was disbelieved. You know the rest—I was condemned.

Lan. And I could have cleared you.

Sir G. [To LANCIA.] Stay; this makes for him!

Lan. [Soothingly.] The whole truth you said—this is but part. [To ROCHFORD.] Yes, you were condemned for robbery, and suspected of worse.

Roch. I was.

Sir G. Out with it—of murder.

Lan. Now attend. I had a partner in my political schemes: his name was Rinaldo.

Roch. Rinaldo? ay—speak!

Sir G. [Aside.] Why he's eager for it. [Approaches LANCIA, and whispers.] Wait, Lancia—first—

Eve. No whispering; stand back, Sir Gerard.

Roch. Right—stand back.

[Advancing.]

Sir G. How, fellow?

Roch. Stand back: I have more than life at stake. Now, Count; this Rinaldo—

Lan. Came with me to England; we were seldom apart. After many years, he was seized with mortal sickness; on his deathbed he revealed to me a secret.

Roch. Go on!

Lan. He had heard of your fate. He confessed that he had himself slain Langley in a duel—confessed—ah, with what remorse! that you, though innocent, bore the infamy of his deed.

Roch. Evelyn, you hear?

Sir G. [*To LANCIA.*] This is a fraud! Did you not feign to be his enemy?

Lan. I saw that you were; so concealed my purpose. Rochford, you have more to hear. I took down Rinaldo's confession. He signed it before me, and another witness still living. An attested copy of that confession I have lately sent to Baden; but the original I kept. Hoping to meet you, I have brought it. Take, sir, the proof of your innocence—a proof with which you may dare the world.

[*Produces the written confession, and gives it to*
ROCHFORD.

Roch. [*Glancing at paper.*] Ay, and before that world claim my right! A father's! Yes, my child, the stain is wiped away—the choked heart has vent. No shame, no shrinking, no parting now. Thine, Evelyn, thine for ever! [*ROCHFORD and EVELYN embrace.*] I cannot thank you, sir; let this sight thank you. [*To LANCIA.*

Miss F. But I can thank him, and I think one other can. Gilbert! [*She takes GILBERT'S hand, and places it in EVELYN'S.*] It's with your sanction, neighbour?

Brack. Why, yes, yes, certainly. [*To ROCHFORD.*] I congratulate you, sir. [*Aside.*] What a romance in the family history!

Miss F. Still here, Sir Gerard! What can detain you?

Gil. What, indeed? seeing there's no longer a reputation to slander, a woman to insult, or a bribe to extort.

Miss F. You've fired your battery, Sir Gerard; but the fort stands, you see.

Gil. But he can retrieve himself with a new enemy. As I came in, I found awaiting him certain skirmishers,

cleverly posted round the house—certain emissaries from one Morley, a London merchant.

Sir G. [*Aside.*] By Jove ! the fellow means bailiffs.

Gil. Don't fear ; a grateful country will provide for a man of your talents. You will be lodged in that royal mansion vulgarly called the Queen's Bench.

Miss F. The Queen's Bench. Then Newgate is defrauded.

Sir G. Yes ; I leave you the honours of victory. [*To MISS FORTESCUE.*] A convict for your friend ! [*To GILBERT.*] The convict's child for your wife, ha, ha ! [*To BRACKENBURY.*] To you, sir, a proud addition to your family connections ! For myself, I must be famous like Xenophon, in retreat. Good morning. I shall read of the lady's marriage, and doubtless of her distinguished parentage, in the newspapers. Good morning, good morning ! [*He goes out.*]

Gil. [*Who follows him to the window, and watches.*] He'll get clear of the men after all. No ; they were in ambush ; he runs—they pursue ; ah ! a third meets and stops him. They close round—they have him—they have him ! A very short engagement, and a highly satisfactory result !

Roch. [*To EVELYN.*] Ah ! could thy mother see us ; and she may—she may !

Lan. [*To MISS FORTESCUE.*] I said you would approve of my act.

Miss F. And of the doer. Good friends, as to be happy is the fashion, for once I fall in with it. O Evelyn, this love of yours !—you have done for me. One cannot be long with the sick, and not risk infection.

Roch. [*Smiling.*] From Evelyn ?

Miss F. Yes ; I'm as far gone as she—a mere woman—one of an enslaved sex—and so please you, here is my master. [*Gives her hand to LANCIA.*]

Lan. Expect no mercy ; you have chosen your tyrant.

Eve. Best of friends—you—you marry ! O day of joy !

Brack. [*Aside.*] Marry *him* ! and she might have been a Brackenbury.

Roch. Count, you have given me all that man can give man ; I rejoice in your joy. [*Takes his hand.*]

Eve. Ah, there's a blessing in joy ; but no less in sorrow—sorrow that makes life earnest—shames us from our self-love, with its poor vanities, its mean angers—and, through our own trials, teaches sympathy with all. Yes ; there is virtue in the fire that purifies. Happy they who, like this noble heart—[*Pointing to LANCIA.*]—who like thee, my father—[*Embracing him.*]—come out of it—PURE GOLD !

END OF PURE GOLD.

THE WIFE'S PORTRAIT.

A Household Picture, under Two Lights.

The Wife's Portrait.

*First performed at the THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET, on
Monday, 10th of March 1862.*

CHARACTERS.

DAVID LINDSAY, a classical tutor and man of letters,	Mr HOWE.
DEXTER, an author,	Mr W. FARREN.
CAPTAIN MORTON, cousin of Clara, .	Mr VILLIERS.
ROBERT LINDSAY, aged twelve years, .	Master FIELDER.
MISS LINDSAY, David's sister, . .	Mrs WILKINS.
CLARA LINDSAY, David's wife, . .	Mrs C. YOUNG.
MRS MORTON, wife of Captain Morton, .	Miss WEEKES.
JANET LINDSAY, aged thirteen years, .	Miss STONEHAM.
ANN, a servant,	Miss LOVELL.

*Scene—Partly in London ; partly in Scotland, at Dunloch, on
the Clyde.*

*An interval of one day is supposed to elapse between the 1st and 2d
Scenes of 2d Act.*

THE WIFE'S PORTRAIT.

ACT I., SCENE I.

A room in DAVID LINDSAY'S house in the suburbs of London. The apartment, though scantily furnished, denotes some refinement in its arrangement.

CLARA LINDSAY *is discovered seated by the fire, in an anxious reverie*; MISS LINDSAY *sits opposite, sewing*; ROBERT *seated at table, a slate and books before him.*

Miss L. [*Cheerfully.*] Clara, Clara! I say. Why, where are your thoughts, love? you've been dreaming with open eyes this half-hour.

Clara. [*Sadly.*] It would have been kind, dear aunt, had you let me dream; waking life has few charms for me. [*Shivers, and stirs the fire.*] The bell's broken. Order coals, Robert—no, wait half an hour: coals are two guineas a ton, and we've no right to luxuries.

Miss L. My dear Clara, what can you mean? Go, Robert. [*ROBERT goes out.*] Cheer up, all will be well; my dear brother's earnings——

Clara. For five pupils twice a week at 3s. a lesson amount to 30s.; just seven above the rent: that's now a month in arrear, and the landlord threatens.

Miss L. [*Aside.*] It's very hard for her; she was tenderly reared. What a shame that her father, the major, who lived in comfort on his annuity, should have left nothing behind him! [*After a pause.*] But who knows, Clara; poor David's talents may be acknowledged at last?

Clara. I've lost hope. Ever since he threw up his

professorship in Glasgow, and came to London for fame, life has been one long struggle.

Miss L. After all he has written, he'll surely find some publisher——

Clara. To buy his epic of "Ulysses," or his "Systems of Moral Philosophy?" No.

Miss L. But there's his tragedy of "Leonidas;" you know he counts so upon that; and his new friend, Mr Dexter, has taken a copy of it to the manager.

Clara. Tragedy's grown stale at the theatre. Would David write what's useful, he might provide for his family; but perhaps at the expense of his taste.

Miss L. You speak bitterly.

Clara. Possibly. A mother who sees want threaten her children cannot always be amiable.

Miss L. Come, let me talk to you. [*She extends her hand, which after a slight hesitation CLARA takes and sits on a stool at her feet.*] My dear Clara, must this strife between husband and wife never cease? At least David is industrious; he's now with his pupils, and when at home the pen's never out of his hand.

Clara. But his notions are so old-fashioned; he's all for the classics, like his father before him; he writes nothing that sells.

Miss L. He hasn't the gift to be popular.

Clara. Nor the will.

Miss L. Perhaps not; you know he says he writes for posterity.

Clara. Yes; but Robert's coat's threadbare, and Janet wants a cloak. Perhaps I feel these things too much; but I had the misfortune to be born a lady.

Miss L. But were not the less fit, on that account, to be David's wife.

Clara. Forgive me! I meant no reproaches; I could not reproach you. [*Kisses her tenderly.*]

Miss L. Nor should you David. I know what you have to bear; but a wife should bear with a husband who loves her.

Clara. [*Impulsively.*] Ay, if he loved me !

Miss L. He does.

Clara. No, aunt, no ; that dream's over. Years since he threw over me the spell of his fancy, and made me an idol. He married, found me a mere woman with a woman's faults, and was disenchanted. And now, when I am forced to remind him of household cares, of bills that must be paid, of wants that must be met, he hints that I drag him down, that I lower his mind.

Miss L. You mistake.

Clara. No, there's the sting ! [*Rises from stool and sits again at fire.*] Obscurity, privation, toil, even fears for my children, I could endure ; but to be looked upon as a sordid drawback—I that did so love him—that makes me indignant, bitter ! I half become what he believes me, because he believes it.

Miss L. There's something to be said for him too. Here are the coals.

Enter ANN with coals, which MISS LINDSAY throws on the fire.

[*Stirring fire.*] Take heart ! I often think that trouble's like the poker : we shouldn't know how much light and warmth there was in us unless we were well stirred.

Clara. It's so with you.

Ann. Bills, ma'am. [*Giving them respectfully and dusting fire-place.*] The baker was pressing to be paid—almost rude. And there's the taxes ; the collector said he wouldn't call again.

Clara. Very well, that will do, Ann.

Ann. [*Crosses.*] And please, ma'am, Master Robert was a-trundling his hoop ; so I called him in. Here he is.

[*Goes out.*]

Enter ROBERT.

Clara. Why did you leave your lessons, sir ? How often have I forbidden you to play in the street ?

Robert. I didn't think, ma——

Clara. [*Severely.*] Silence ! [*Suddenly softening and taking his hands, as he looks dejected.*] There, don't try, mother ; she has much to tease her.

Robert. [*Apart to MISS LINDSAY.*] O aunty, here's papa and Janet coming ! I saw them meet as he came out of the draper's.

Miss L. Well, go to your books, dear. [*A peculiar, tremulous knock heard at door.*] That's David's knock !
[CLARA springs up, resumes her seat at fire, and seems absorbed in her work.]

Miss L. Here he is ! Here's papa ! [*Going to meet him.*]

Enter DAVID, followed by JANET, who gives CLARA a parcel, and kisses her.

Miss L. What a singular knock that is of yours, David ; I should know it among a thousand. *Taking his hand.*

Clara. [*Glancing from her work.*] Oh, it's you, David.

David. [*Aside.*] She has no welcome. Yes, Clara, I've just finished with my pupils ; here are the week's earnings.
[*Gives her money.*]

Clara. I'm very sorry, but it's all bespoken ; the rent's overdue, and Janet must have a cloak.

David. Very well, Clara.

Miss L. But you look ill—quite fagged out.

David. It's nothing ; it's no matter. [*Aside.*] Clara never sees it.

Clara. [*Rising anxiously.*] Ill, David ?

[DAVID takes MS. from shelf, and without perceiving her, sits at table and begins to read.]

Clara. Ah ! he's lost in his tragedy. I mustn't disturb him.

David. [*After a pause, taking his pen.*] This speech of Leonidas wants fire. [*Recites it unconsciously*]—

“Ye brave three hundred, though your foes count millions,
Reckon by souls, not forms, and we outweigh them.”

“Outweigh's” tame, very tame. Perhaps it's my delivery though ; I'm not lofty and classical enough. [*Recites with an assumption of great dignity*]—

"Ye brave three hundred, though your foes count millions,
Reckon by souls"—

Pshaw! that's stilted and pompous; I'll try the natural conversational manner. [*Recites in a colloquial style.*]

"Ye brave three hundred, though your foes count millions"—

Nay; the tea and toast style will never do for heroes.

"Ye brave three hundred"— [*Stops perplexed.*]

Janet. [*Who has taken off her bonnet and shawl, approaches DAVID slyly, and raps on the table.*] Any one at home?

Clara. Janet! Janet!

Janet. [*Rapping again.*] House quite empty?

David. [*Looking up.*] What is it? Well, Janet?

Janet. Postwoman.

David. Hush, love—

"Ye brave three hundred"—

Janet. Fact, pa. The postman put these into my hand as you went upstairs. [*Producing letters.*] All paid as far as the street door; a penny each for the postwoman—one, two, three! [*Taking a kiss from him as she gives each letter.*] The last's a double one.

[*He kisses her twice.*]

David. [*Looking at the stamp.*] Ludgate Hill! the nearest post to Paternoster Row. At last, sister!

Miss L. Yes, David.

David. Answers from the publishers, no doubt. Yes, yes; sit close. [*Opens a letter.*]

Miss L. Come, Clara.

Clara. [*Hurt, aside.*] David doesn't ask me. [*Aloud.*] No, I'm only a wife, and not invited!

Miss L. Nay—

David. It's past belief! Were there ever people so blind to their own interests?

Miss L. Bad news?

David. Listen. [*Reads*] "Sir,—We regret to inform

you, that your elaborate and learned treatise, entitled 'Attempts towards the Recovery of a Universal Language; with some remarks upon the original confusion of tongues, —their primary divisions, and their possible re-combinations,'—is not in our opinion calculated to interest the general public; we must, therefore, respectfully decline it." Not interesting! Why, it was the grandest idea ever conceived; just think of it—one language for all the world! It cost me years of study. Well they've lost their chance; and I would have given it to them for nothing.

Miss L. No, David; you must think of yourself.

David. Myself? It would have been a boon to mankind. Who, that deserves to live in the future, thinks first of himself? Well, thank heaven, there are more publishers than one; and there's my tragedy. What's this? [*Opens second letter.*] "Sir,—I have returned, per parcel-delivery, your epic, called 'Ulysses, a Sequel to the Odyssey;' the title-page was enough. I suppose, if published, few readers would get further."

Miss L. How impertinent!

David. Hush, hush, sister! we can't waste a word upon this person. Here's a third. [*Apart.*] There's the tragedy.

[*Opens third letter, and reads to himself.*]

Miss L. Well, David, the third letter?

David. [*Not reading, but relating.*] The writer does not believe that my Scheme for a Model Republic, altered from Plato's, would have a chance at the circulating libraries, or that it would be saleable in a cheap form at the railway stations. Besides this—[*Looking at letter*]—he says, though he does not know Mr Plato personally, he thinks the subject—"Plato's Republic"—objectionable, and likely to strike at social order. Poor Plato! [*Aside.*] Well, there's still the tragedy; and young Dexter promised me the manager's answer this morning.

Miss L. My dear David! Come, speak to him, Clara.

David. No, don't trouble Clara.

Clara. [*Who is engaged with ROBERT'S lesson, repressing her tears.*] I should only intrude, and I'm busy. [*To*

ROBERT.] That sum's quite wrong. Where's your French translation? Not three lines done. What have you been scrawling here? Windmills, and soldiers on horseback! Go to your room, sir, till that lesson's perfect; I insist on it, Robert.

[ROBERT *slowly goes out with his books and papers.*

David. What has he done?

Clara. Oh, of course he's not in fault; it's only his severe mother. [JANET *runs up and kisses her.*] Ah, she loves me! [Burst into tears and goes out with JANET.

Miss L. Ah, she's unhappy! Why don't you talk to her, David, about your plans.

David. Alas, sister! she cares not for them. If I do ever breathe to her the hope that makes life sacred—the hope that I may one day raise or soften the hearts of my fellow-men, perhaps live in their memories, she only asks what it will bring in.

Miss L. David, she is anxious for the children; remember, it is she who sees the scanty wardrobe, and dreads the empty cupboard.

David. That's true; but she's so sarcastic.

Miss L. She thinks you despise her.

David. She despises me—has long ceased to love me; she thought the life of an author was to be a triumph without a struggle; when the hard fight of life came, she grew disgusted, and repented.

Miss L. [*Aside, rises.*] How long people may live under one roof, and be blind to each other's hearts!

David. Why here's a letter I've not opened! [*Opens it, rises.*] "Dunloch, Scotland." [*Reads.*] Come, a ray of sunshine; Clara's cousin and his wife offer, as they promised, to educate Janet with their own children.

Miss L. How kind! Clara was so anxious for it.

David. They enclose this note to pay our expenses to Scotland.

[*Gives her the letter.*

Miss L. [*Reading.*] Ah, Douglas Lodge! Douglas Lodge on the Clyde—the very house where Clara lived when you courted her.

David. Happy times ! Yes, we were then all friends together ; Clara's cousin took the house, you know, when her father died.

Miss L. [*Reading.*] What ! Your cousin asks you to go by the first train.

David. Yes, that he may see us before he leaves home. Can't Clara go ?

Miss L. Impossible ! she has the care of the house on her, and her health is delicate ; besides, he wishes to consult you on your affairs. [*Pointing to the letter.*]

David. What's to be done ? To-day's Friday, and I must be back to my new pupils on Tuesday.

Miss L. There's but one course ; you must start to-day.

David. [*Looking at his watch.*] It must be this very hour then, or we shall lose the train. Dear sister, will you order the trunks to be packed, and send for what Janet needs ?

Miss L. Instantly.

[*She goes out. A quick and long knock heard.*]

David. Who can that be ?

Enter CLARA hastily.

Clara. O David !

David. Read this, Clara. [*Offers the letter.*]

Clara. [*Cheerfully.*] Not just now. I heard Mr Dexter below ; he may bring us good news.

David. Of the tragedy ? That might help us all ; open to me a bright career. [*Aside.*] It's strange I always felt so confident about it before ; but now——

Miss L. Here's Mr Dexter, and, as usual, in such spirits. [*Goes to door.*] Mind, sir, you'll fall, you'll fall !

Enter DEXTER.

Dex. Fall, my dear madam, I never fall ; or if I do, it's on my toes. Fall ! bless you, I could walk in skates up the sides of a pyramid, pirouette on the summit, and alight on *terra firma* without a scratch. How d'ye do,

Mrs Lindsay? [*Aside, glancing at DAVID, who is nervously arranging his bookshelf.*] Ah! there's my friend; I can't say now whether I more pity or admire that man. This is an awkward little commission of mine, but it must be done. Good morning, dear sir. [*Respectfully.*]

David. [*Turning.*] Oh, why—why, it's Mr Dexter!

Dex. Yes, punctual as the sun. You know I said I should call about that little matter of yours.

David. [*Aside.*] He can't mean the tragedy. That little matter?

Dex. [*Aside.*] I've made a mistake. I mean the little matter of arranging for your tragedy; of course I don't call the tragedy itself a little matter.

David. Why, hardly, hardly. Well, Mr Dexter.

[*They sit.*]

Dex. [*Aside.*] This is decidedly unpleasant;—though perhaps, my dear sir, the manager wouldn't object if your work were a trifle—a shade—the slightest degree—you understand?

David. Not quite.

Dex. A little less matter than it is; he finds it too long.

David. Too long? That's impossible.

Dex. It should be so from your pen.

David. I don't mean that; I mean that it's only the usual number of lines, and that if it seems long, it is because—because—[*Mastering his emotion with dignity*—] I have failed in it.

Dex. [*Starting up.*] Failed! you're joking. I never fail; and what am I compared to you?

David. [*Sadly.*] It wasn't for me to draw the bow of Ulysses.

Dex. Yes, it was, and to hit the "bull's-eye" too, if you only allow for wind—the taste of the times, I mean. True, it's changeable—all wind is; you've only to humour it. Last spring, an African prince came over with two sweet children. Immediately there was a run on black babies; out came my "Molok and Malou, or the Twins of Abyssinia;" sold a thousand a day for a fortnight! Another

year we had the hippopotamus. In a week, my farce "The Hippopotamus turned Lion" filled the theatre to the slips. As to the Crystal Palace, my comic guide called "Puck, or a Girdle round the Earth in Forty Minutes," is as good as an annuity. But we're wandering; the manager rather fancies that Leonidas talks a little too much.

Miss L. Why, what else can he do in a play, Mr Dexter?

Dex. Fight, my dear madam, fight!

Miss L. Well, but he couldn't fight through five acts.

Dex. No, ma'am; few heroes can. Ah! if the play had only been in three.

David. Three, Mr Dexter! [*Controlling himself.*] Well, he couldn't be fighting all the time through three.

Dex. No; I see the hitch.

David. And if he doesn't talk, where's the sentiment of the piece?

Dex. Ah, that's not essential!

David. The development of character,—motive passion?

Dex. Very little room for them.

David. The poetry?

Dex. Decidedly better without it.

David. What have you left then?

Dex. Incident, sir, incident; crowd your canvas with events.

David. And leave out your men and women! But surely, Mr Dexter, the manager can't hate poetry?

Dex. On the contrary, he prefers it; but after all, a manager is but a merchant. Call him a wine-merchant; he may think the old grape of Mount Parnassus excellent for his private drinking; but what if his customers will insist upon having the vintage of the Boulevards, or the Palais Royal? No, my dear sir, incident—a sensation scene, my dear sir; can't you make your hero take a header or leap on the Persians, like Leotard, by the help

of a trapèze? You've a fair chance in your last scene ; but it's thrown away.

Miss L. Thrown away?

Dex. Yes, Leonidas makes a speech, and fights with only one Persian ; cut out the speech, and let him tackle three Persians at once. [*Takes a fighting attitude.*] Three's under the mark for a hero.

David. Why, that's melodrama ! What would Sophocles have thought of it?

Dex. Can't say ; he won't be in the pit, will he? Then there's your heroine, I've an idea for her.

David. Well?

Dex. Flourish of trumpets—Leonidas kills Persian No. 1 ; another flourish of trumpets—Leonidas kills Persian No. 2 ; grand flourish of trumpets and terrific combat—he kills Persian No. 3 ; a dastard Persian, No. 4, stabs Leonidas in the back ; a brave young Spartan kills the dastard Persian ; a chance arrow strikes the brave young Spartan—he sinks by the side of Leonidas, his helmet rolls off—it's the face of a woman—it's the wife of Leonidas herself ! There's a tableau ! there's a situation for you !

David. Impossible, Mr Dexter ! According to history, she was safe at home.

Dex. What matter? where's the use of a fine imagination if you keep yourself to facts?

David. [*Dejectedly.*] I see, I see.

Dex. [*Aside.*] Now, how to bring out my proposal? I know he's in want.—My dear Mr Lindsay, may I talk to you for a minute or two, not as a poet, but as a man?

Clara. Listen to him, David.

David. I fear, sir, the two have become inseparable.

Dex. No, poets live on air, and men don't. There, blundering fellow that I am, I've hurt you. But consider, all things must have a beginning ; once insert your wedge, and you may force your way. Now this play's the wedge.

David. Well?

Dex. But it's a trifle too large; it wants planing, sharpening, pointing—mere drudgery that would tire you. Now shall I be your carpenter? In other words, let me throw your play into three acts, put in some rough situations, wind up with the Pass of Thermopylæ, the Greeks and Persians in real armour, and a general combat. Fifty to one your play's taken, your purse fills, your wedge enters, and you can wield the mallet ever after with your own hand.

David [*Rising.*] How, Mr Dexter—do I understand—you cannot venture, sir—forgive me! [*Grasping his hand*] You mean it kindly, most kindly, I'm sure.

Miss L. That he does.

Clara. [*Apart to DEXTER.*] And will the manager take the play with your alterations?

Dex. He will.

Clara. But not otherwise?

Dex. I fear not otherwise.

Clara. [*Anxiously apart to DAVID.*] David, you'll not refuse. Think of the children.

Enter ROBERT and JANET.

David. [*Surprised.*] Clara!

Clara. If they should want a home; for the children's sake!

David. Mr Dexter, I feel your goodness deeply, it shows me that I have in you a true friend; but I cannot accept your offer. My tastes are formed on old, perhaps worn-out models, but my heart clings to them; nor could I, with honour, accept in my name, and as the meed of my talents, a recompense which would be due only to yours. Heaven bless you.

[Again grasps his hand warmly, then walks away and sits at table.]

Dex. That's to the point now. Why can't he put stuff of that sort into his plays, instead of that confounded blank verse? [*To MISS LINDSAY.*] Good morning, ma'am.

Good morning, Mrs Lindsay ; perhaps I may serve him some other way.

Clara. [*Despondingly.*] Thank you truly ; I fear not.

Miss L. Yes, David has so many gifts.

Dex. Gifts ! he has as many gifts as a three-decker has guns ; he might take any fort on the whole coast of life, if he could only get within range. I say, my dear Lindsay, do cut your play down ; take a hint from our new tactics. Your long tragedy's like a man-of-war that can only float in deep water ; its your little gun-boat that runs into shore which does the mischief and carries the day.

[*He goes out.*]

Clara. And so you've refused !

Miss L. Hush, Clara don't fret him now.

Clara. Oh ! its only money that he's refused ; it only means cold and hunger.

[*Pressing the children closely to her.*]

Miss L. Clara ! before the children ?

Clara. [*Sarcastically.*] I forgot that ; but it's scarcely a fault, you know, to forget one's children.

David [*Turning to her with stern grief.*] Clara !

Miss L. Go to Ann, dears. [*To JANET.*] She's packing your trunk, love ; I'll tell you why, soon.

[*ROBERT and JANET go out.*]

David. Do I forget the children ?

Clara. Haven't you just thrown away success—success which is money ?

David. Money gained by another's industry is alms.

Clara. Oh, pride becomes an obscure author !

David. Self-respect does.

Miss L. Clara !

Clara. An author ! the puppet of popular favour, who holds his very brains at the disposal of others ; he can act the grand seigneur—the high-toned gentleman !

David. I hope so ; for he has the refinement by nature which some fail to gain by education ; he is of a class whose emotions make life's morals—whose thoughts become its laws—rulers, for they sway the heart—lawgivers,

for they mould the will. I am, as you say, poor and humble; but still enrolled in that band. Madam, you may wound me in other ways, and I shall bear it; but you must not insult my order.

Clara. I was wrong—mad; *David!*

[Imploringly lays her hand upon his arm.]

David. Not just now. Ah! had there been more brightness, more sympathy by my hearth, I might not have been now the obscure man whom you despise.

Clara. *[Apart to MISS LINDSAY.]* There, I told you so! I am his evil star, the blight upon his powers. *[To DAVID.]* Perhaps, then, we should be better apart?

David. We shall be so—at least, for some days; we were interrupted when I offered you this.

[Giving her letter.]

Clara. From Scotland?

David. You will see that your cousin begs me to go there instantly.

Clara. *[Reading.]* With Janet? When must you start?

David. This very day; at once.

Clara. Impossible!

Miss L. It's for her good, you know.

Clara. Yes; but so soon!

David. I have no choice; I must return to my pupils on Tuesday.

Clara. But Janet's clothes?

Miss L. Are nearly packed; she'll travel in my shawl.

Clara. She needs so many things.

Miss L. They can be got when she arrives. I must see to the luggage.

Clara. The luggage!

David. *[Looking at his watch.]* And you'll send for a cab, sister.

Miss L. Yes.

[She goes out.]

Clara. What, this instant! My child!

[Going towards door.]

David. One word, Clara, ere we part. It has often

struck me that the cares and trials of my lot are a burden to you, that my pursuits do not interest you. I think, perhaps, you might be happier if you lived in Scotland with Janet, while I remained and worked here. Think of it while I am absent.

Clara. David ! [*Aside.*] I see, he would be free from the encumbrance, the drag. [*Aloud.*] I'll think of it.

Re-enter MISS LINDSAY, JANET, and ROBERT.

Janet. [*Partly attired for her journey.*] Is it true, dear mamma ; must I leave you ?

Clara. [*Clasping her.*] My own ! But for a time, darling.

Janet. You'll come and see me ?

Clara. Ay, that I will.

Robert. And I'll come too, Janet. I shall be papa when you're away.

David. No, don't be that, my boy ; be a comfort to your mother.

Enter ANN.

Ann. The cab's here, sir. [*Goes out.*]

Miss L. [*Gives plaid.*] Here's your plaid ; your best suit and linen are in the trunk, David ; you had better see that all's right in the carpet-bag.

David. Good-bye, Robert ; sister ! [*Kisses them.*]

Clara. [*Fondly embracing JANET.*] Bless you ! Bless you, darling !

Janet. And you, ma—you'll come ?

David. [*Taking his hat and advancing.*] Clara !

[*Kisses her.*]

Clara. Good-bye, David !

Miss L. You'd better not come down, Clara.

Clara. I can't ! One last ! [*Embracing JANET.*] Now go. [*All go out but CLARA, she throws herself into a chair by table, and weeps bitterly.*] And so he wishes we should part ; I kept that grief down, at least. I'm sorry,

though, I took his kiss so coldly ; but I couldn't have borne up a moment longer. [*Listening.*] I hear their footsteps !—they tread upon my heart !—Gone !—I wish I had said “Heaven bless you !” [*DAVID'S peculiar knock is heard.*] Ah ! he's come back ; perhaps he would make it up with me.

Re-enter MISS LINDSAY.

Well ?

Miss L. David's forgot his tragedy, which he wants to take with him. [*Takes it from table, and goes out.*]

Clara. I'll go and say good-bye—but no ; if he really wishes we should part, I mustn't force myself on him. Still, he's going away ; if anything should happen to him ! Yes, I will speak to him. [*The door closes loudly, and the cab drives off.*] Ah, it's too late ! [*She rushes to the window, then turns from it, advances towards front, and supports herself by a chair.*] Too late ! Too late !

ACT II., SCENE I.

An apartment in Douglas Lodge on the Clyde. The room presents an aspect of comfort and elegance. A bay window at back commands both at the sides and in front, a view of the adjacent port of the Clyde, and of a projecting rock, surmounted by castle. Wine on table.

CAPTAIN and MRS MORTON, DAVID, and JANET grouped round a cheerful fire. Time, near sunset.

Capt. M. Fill your glass, fill your glass, Lindsay ! Nay, then. [*Fills DAVID'S glass himself.*] You've a long journey before you, since you will leave Scotland. You'd better stay, and go with me to the Highlands.

Mrs M. Much better ; you seem only just come. You've spent but one night under our roof, and found it so dreary, you won't risk another.

Capt. M. Very well put, Meg.

David. [*Deprecatingly.*] Nay, Margaret.

Mrs M. Ask papa for one more night, Janet. [*To DAVID.*] She won't leave your side a moment to play with her cousins.

Janet. Do stay, pa ; do now ; won't you ?

David. Tell your cousin, darling, that papa has duties at home, grave duties, and that he must deserve such kind friends by doing what is right ; besides, I wrote home that I should start by the five o'clock steamboat to-day, and take the train at Glasgow.

Capt. M. Well, we must say no more ; you needn't start just yet.

Mrs M. It was so pleasant to have a gossip over old times.

Capt. M. Yes ; and in this dear quaint house where my uncle, Clara's father, lived before us. There's the old corner where poor Clara used to sit at embroidery, when you, sir, came a-wooing.

Mrs M. Yes ; do you remember what a trick she had of pretending to be lost in her silks, that she might hide her blushes ? Has she any of those tricks now, David ?

David. Now ! [*Sighs.*]

Capt. M. Ah ! you'd some fears about her. She was the belle of every ball, at race or regatta. That young ensign, the seventh son of a Scotch lord, would have turned the heads of many a major's daughter.

Mrs M. Then there was rich MacPherson, with his, "Eh, lassie, I'm a plain body ; but if ye'll tak' me, ye sail no greet for siller." [*Laughing.*] But Clara was true through all.

Janet. Pa, love !

David. Yes, pet.

Janet. Did mamma ever really live in this nice comfortable house ?

David. She did, Janet.

Janet. Then why did she ever leave it for our gloomy place in London ? Oh ! I suppose to be with you.

David. Yes ; to be with me.

Janet. O, do you know, pa, I saw a book to-day in the library called "Sonnets, by David Lindsay ;" was that you ?

Capt. M. Yes ; papa was the poet.

Mrs M. Clara gave it me ; it's twelve years since.

Janet. There was a sonnet in it to Clara. Now wasn't that ma ? And she had written under it something about her beloved David.

[*DAVID remains silent and averts his head.*]

Mrs M. Will Janet run into the drawing-room and bring me my crochet-work ? [JANET goes out.]

Capt. M. [*Rising and walking to window.*] Time's getting on ; we must start in a few minutes.

Mrs M. Is the steamer in sight ?

Capt. M. Not yet ; there's a mist rising, but it's very calm.

[*As the mist rises, the stage very gradually darkens till end of scene, and lights are seen from windows of castle.*]

Mrs M. I'm glad of that ; the Clyde here is nearly a mile wide, and sometimes as rough as the sea.

Re-enter JANET with work, and a miniature in case.

Janet. Here's your work, cousin ; and Oh, look pa—I've found mamma ! I saw this on the table, just opened it, and there she was. I'm sure it's ma's likeness, although she's a good deal altered. How beautiful she looks, how happy—how different from what she looks now ! [*DAVID takes the miniature, looks at it awhile, then kisses it, and, after a struggle, weeps silently and covers his face with his hands.*] What's the matter, pa ?

Capt. M. [*To JANET.*] Come, little lady, we must go together and see after Andrew and the luggage ; there—I've eloped with her ! [*Goes out with JANET.*]

David. [*Rallying himself, and rising.*] Don't go, Margaret. If you knew what feelings these few hours with you bring back—what emotions this face revives ! [*Looking*

at miniature.] Her old smile kindly and sudden as sunlight through a rift ; those eyes fresh and pure that had seen life but in its morning ; that ripening lip like to-morrow—ever in the bud !

Mrs M. And she's still the same—not changed ?

David. By trial—not time. If a tint be lost, if a line be deepened, a mother's cares have blanched the rose and worn the channel ; she chose my fate, or she might still be thus. [*Looking at miniature, with much emotion.*] Ah ! give it me—let me have it ?

Mrs M. O ! we should miss it so much.

David. It's the Clara of my youth ; I could almost fancy it was a spell—a talisman to save me.

Mrs M. Well, then you shall have it.

David. Thanks, thanks ! I will never part with it—never ; it will make me a better man.

Mrs M. [*Taking miniature.*] One more look ; it can't make you a better husband.

David. O, yes, I've neglected her—turned, vexed from the very cares I should have lightened—been lost in the creation of poetic virtues, while I forgot common duties.

Mrs M. My dear friend——

[*Laying down miniature and taking his hand.*]

David. Well, well, I may repair the past—I hope so. But if, Margaret, by any chance I should never—[*She smiles.*]—nay, such things are possible—if I should never meet Clara again——

Mrs M. David !

David. You'll tell her what I now say—that I knew all she had sacrificed for me, that I was sensible of my many faults, and loved her to the last.

Mrs M. Oh ! you'll see her to-morrow.

David. [*Solemnly.*] Who knows what to-morrow may bring forth ?

Re-enter CAPTAIN MORTON, hat in hand.

Capt. M. Now, indeed you must go. The steamer's near the landing.

David. Farewell, then, dear Margaret !

Mrs M. Farewell ! farewell ! [*Shaking hands.*]

Capt. M. Come, Lindsay ! Your luggage is in the hall.
I'll see you on board, quick, quick !

David. Where's Janet ?

Capt. M. Outside here ; come !

[CAPTAIN MORTON and DAVID go out.]

Mrs M. [*Standing at door.*] Take care of yourself.
Good-bye ! good-bye ! What ! Janet, Janet. [*She goes off for an instant and returns with JANET in tears.*] Nay, dear, let's go to the window ; we shall see papa pass. Come ! [*They go to window and look from it.*] There they are ! how quick they go. Ah ! now papa turns his head, he sees us ! Wave your hand !

Janet. [*Waving her hand.*] Papa !

Mrs M. Look ! he replies ! I can hardly see them now there's such a mist ; yes ! there they are. I've quite lost them, it's so thick ; but they must be at the vessel.

Janet. How the mist makes one see everything through a veil. What's that great thing in the distance like a moving rock ?

Mrs M. Most likely a large steamer bound for the North Channel ; it's getting quite a fog.

Janet. The sailors down there have lit their lanterns.

Mrs M. Who is it that hurries so this way ? my husband !

Re-enter CAPTAIN MORTON, hurriedly.

Anything forgotten, George ?

Capt. M. It's that miniature of Clara ; David says you gave it to him.

Mrs M. Yes ; I laid it down here, I think.

[*Looks for it.*]

Janet. Or perhaps in the next room. [*Goes out.*]

Capt. M. He begged me to run for it, as if it were for his life.

Mrs M. [*Still looking.*] You left him on board ?

Capt. M. Yes ; safe on board. Quick, love !

Mrs M. Here it is !

Capt. M. [*From window.*] See ; we're too late, Margaret ; the boat's off ; I saw the light at her mast. There she goes !

Mrs M. How very thick ! I can't see half across the river.

Capt. M. She's rounding the rock now, I think. [*Pause.*] Yes ! there she glides off !

Mrs M. I can still see her light—and look ! there's another light.

Capt. M. Yes ! and by its quick motion that of a large steamer.

Mrs M. And—oh ! look, George ! how close she comes to David's. There ! look ! look !

Capt. M. Heavens ! she hasn't seen her !—she's on her—strikes her !

[*A distant cry from the river of "Help ! help ! boats."*

The same cry is repeated loudly from the shore : then the cry is again heard from the river and shore at once ; a signal-gun is heard.]

Mrs M. Oh ! that cry !

[*A roar of voices from the BOATMEN below. "Now lads ! now lads ! push off. Help ! help ! help !"*

The trampling of men is at the same time heard, and the gleams of shifting lanterns are visible from the shore.

1st Voice. They've fouled. Why she's on the rock !

2nd Voice. Yes—filling ! Boats !

Capt. M. [*From window.*] Quick ! Quick ! my brave fellows.

2nd Voice. Too late, sir. She heels over.

Capt. M. Sinks ! Sinks !

Mrs M. O, George ! George ! You're sure he was on board ?

Capt. M. Alas ! quite sure !

Mrs M. Heaven pity him !

Capt M. Lost ! lost !

[*Signal-gun is again heard, and the reflection of a*

blue signal light is visible on stage ; they rush out, she clinging to his arm. Voices and hurrying of SEAMEN heard from the beach below.]

SCENE II.

A passage, lighted by a small lamp in DAVID LINDSAY'S house in London.

Enter MISS LINDSAY, in bonnet and walking dress ; ANN enters at opposite side.

Miss L. Ann, I think I heard the bell ; Mrs Lindsay is most likely come down, and wants you.

Ann. Yes, ma'am, she has just rung.

Miss L. Of course, you'll have tea ready and the room comfortably arranged for Mr Lindsay's return ?

Ann. Of course, ma'am ; Mrs Lindsay's gave me the most particular orders.

Miss L. That's right ; we expect your master almost immediately.

Ann. [*Cheerfully.*] He can't be here too soon. [*Going.*]

Miss L. [*Aside.*] That's a good faithful creature.—And Ann, just tell your mistress that I've gone over to the baker's to order a nice seed-cake and one or two other things.

Ann. Very well, ma'am.

[*Goes out.*]

Enter ROBERT, cap in hand, with a toy ship.

Miss L. Well, Robert, my boy !

Robert. Well, aunty, look here—look at my ship ! mamma gave me a shilling to buy it. I wish papa was coming home every day.

Miss L. Why so ?

Robert. Why first, because it's so jolly to see him again. Then, it puts mamma into such good-humour. Shouldn't I get shillings out of her ?

Miss L. Go in, foolish boy ; mind that when you marry you make your wife glad to see you again.

Robert. Oh, I shan't marry, aunty! I don't fancy women. I shall be a sailor and go round the world.

[*Runs off.*]

Miss L. [Smiling.] It puts mamma into such a good humour! What the lad says is true. This short separation between Clara and David may be good for both. I'm sure she's much softened to him—sure by a hundred signs that she loves him deeply, though doubt of his love makes her try to hide her own. Ah, what a pity! so full as life is of accidents that may part us at any time—so sure as it is that the dearest of us must part at last; but I'll not grow melancholy; at all events the present seems brighter, and why cloud it with fears? No; I'll hope for the best, hope for the best.

[*She goes out.*]

SCENE III.

Same as First Act.

Lights on the table; tea equipage on small table at back.

ROBERT and ANN discovered. Enter CLARA.

Clara. Ann, have tea ready; you'll bring it the moment I ring.

Ann. [Arranging table, &c.] Yes, ma'am.

Clara. [Referring to a letter, apart.] "I shall leave Dunloch for Glasgow by the five o'clock steamer on Monday evening, and be with you the next night, soon after seven." Yes; that's to-night, Tuesday—just one hurried line. [*Rather sadly.*] Soon after seven; why it's now nearly eight. Where's Miss Lindsay?

Ann. Just gone to the baker's, ma'am; Mr Dexter saw her cross the road.

Clara. [Recovering herself, and in a buoyant, almost gay mood.] Very well. [*Taking up flowers.*] Here Robert, love, sort and cut these chrysanthemums; then put them into the vase. Is my collar quite right?

[*Looking in mirror.*]

Ann. Quite, ma'am ; you look charming.

Clara. [*To Ann.*] I think I'll wear my blue bow.
[*Aside.*] No, this will do ; he likes pink best. You can go, Ann. [*Ann goes out. Clara arranges herself before mirror.*] Bring me that bracelet, Robert.

Robert. [*Bringing it.*] Why it's your cameo, ma ; the one you said papa gave you before you were married.

Clara. There, clasp it !

Robert. [*Laughing archly*] I suppose you've put it on because papa's coming home ?

Clara. Hush, hush !

Robert. And that was why you were so hard to please about your bow and your back hair.

Clara. Go to your flowers, sir, and don't jest about your papa ; you're growing very like him. [*Kisses him.*

Robert. Is that why you kiss me ? [*Taking up vase.*

Clara. [*Apart.*] Can a child read my heart thus—all its fondness which this absence has again revealed ? How I long to see him—to say, "David, forgive the past ; it was my trouble, not myself !" Yet he wished us to part ; gravely, earnestly. I may have said so in a wilful mood ; but wish it ! ah, no ! My love may be only a trouble to him ; I must keep my secret better.

Enter MISS LINDSAY and DEXTER, a newspaper in his hand.

Miss L. [*Laying down a parcel.*] Well, Clara, I've done my little commission, you see, and brought Mr Dexter back. Isn't David arrived yet ?

Clara. [*Rather indifferently.*] No, not yet !

Miss L. He should have been before this.

Clara. I suppose the train's not punctual.

Dex. Can't rely upon them ; railways are slow things after all. When are wings coming in ?

Clara. [*Aside, looking anxiously at timepiece.*] Five minutes to eight.

Dex. Well ; we've such news ! First, the play's accepted.

Clara. [*Touched.*] What ! David consented ?

Dex. Yes—called on me on his way to the station ; would insist though on our being partners. Next, what should catch my eye just now at the stationer's but a notice of his new book in to-night's paper ?

Clara. What new book ?

Dex. Why that I coaxed him to edit, "Cæsar for Children, or the Commentaries with pictures." Such pictures ! A fac-simile of the chariot of Cassibelanus ; our respected ancestors, the ancient Britons, stained from top to toe with blue woad—the original true blues ; locomotive almanacs, with suns and moons on their bodies ! There's a school-book for you, always in request ; listen. [*Reads from newspaper.*] "This Cæsar of Mr Lindsay's"—he's in print, you see—"is a rare gift book for boys, happily conceived, splendidly illustrated, learnedly annotated, and will be in a thousand homes next Christmas." Bravo ! It's a hit ! It's a hit ! Didn't I say so ?

[*Claps his hands and paces the room.*]

Clara. This was your doing.

Dex. O, it's nothing ! I'm made for the present, Lindsay for the future. He'll be a great man when I'm forgotten ; I know that very well. Bless you, a poet takes nearly a lifetime to grow, and seldom gets well above ground until he's under it. Next age Lindsay may be as much praised as Milton—[*Aside*—and perhaps as little read. Ah ! what's fame after all ? The dictation of the few who care for genius to the many who don't. What have you there, Robby ?

Robert. It's my ship ; I wish you would show me how to fix the jib ?

Dex. Let me first glance at the latest news ; you'll forgive me, ladies. [*Sits at table.*]

Clara. O, certainly. [*Timepiece strikes eight.*] Eight o'clock !

Miss L. Strange, David's not come !

Clara. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Strange ! why aunt, you're getting quite nervous.

Dex. [*Reading aside in a low tone.*] What's this? "Dunloch. By electric telegraph.—The passage boat leaving this port for Glasgow at five last evening, encountered a large steamer in a dense fog, and so fearful was the collision that the smaller vessel sank almost instantly."

Robert. [*Coming to him.*] Her mainsail's right—look!

Dex. "In consequence of the fog nearly every passenger was below: prompt efforts were made; but the ill-fated boat being off the rock at the time, and the night so thick, we grieve to add that the greater number of those on board perished." What port? [*Reads.*] Yes, Dunloch!

Clara. [*Catching the word.*] Did you say Dunloch?

Dex. [*Evasively.*] Did I—did I? [*Reads aside again.*] "We give a complete list of the few who have been rescued—John Black, George Oliphant, Mary Wilson and child, Thomas Blair, William Thompson"—[*He runs down the list of saved with his eye.*] The brief list of saved, and David's name not amongst them!

Clara. [*Approaching.*] What did you say of Dunloch?

Dex. [*Trying to speak carelessly.*] That's the port Lindsay left;—at what hour last evening?

Clara. Five o'clock.

Dex. Five o'clock!

Clara. Why do you speak in that tone?

Robert. I say, Mr Dexter?

Dex. Not just now, dear; isn't it bed-time?

Robert. Sha'n't I stay to see papa?

Clara. Go downstairs, Robert.

Robert. But—

Clara. Go, love. [*ROBERT goes out.*] There's something wrong, Mr Dexter.

Miss L. No, Clara.

Clara. Yes; he named Dunloch. [*To DEXTER.*] Why did you wish Robert away? [*Pause.*] It's in that paper!

[*Tries to take the paper which DEXTER withholds.*]

Dex. My dear friend.

[*Compassionately.*]

Clara. He speaks in pity. Give it me.

Dex. Not just now ; calm yourself

Clara. [*Giving him her hand.*] There, I'm quite calm.
[*Suddenly seizing paper.*] Give me the paper. Ah ! [*She reads.*] "Dunloch—by electric—fatal collision !"

Miss L. Fatal collision !

Clara. [*Who has stood silent with eyes riveted on paper.*] Ah ! list of saved. [*Reads.*] "John Black, George Oliphant, Mary"—Where's his name ? David's ?

[DEXTER sadly turns away his head ; she looks at him for a moment and falls senseless in chair.

Miss L. [*Bending over her.*] Clara !

Dex. Remove the paper.

Miss L. How she grasps it ! [*Taking the paper, she reads it by CLARA'S side.*] O, David, David !

Dex. We must now think but of her.

Miss L. [*Still reading, and violently repressing her emotion.*] True, true.

Dex. Hush ! she revives.

Clara. [*Uttering a deep sigh and gradually recovering.*] Yes, yes, it's gone, it's gone now ; I've had these dreams before, often—but they go, they go. [*Looking round.*] Ah, what's this ? not daylight, not my chamber. How you look !

Dex. Let me entreat——

Clara. [*With impetuous command.*] Silence ! it was a dream.

Miss L. It may not be true.

Clara. True ! let me think ; true ! What, I here, life going its daily round with me ; rest, food, talk, duty ; a roof to shelter, fire to warm—and he—[*Laughs hysterically.*

Dex. There may be hope.

Clara. May ! there must ! [*In an altered tone.*] Why, what's changed ? there are his books, his very pen, the table at which he wrote, the door by which he entered—often without a welcome. To see him there now—what would I not give ! [*Sinking on her knees.*] Heaven, I have sinned. I was his wife, but did not lighten his cares—did

not cheer his toil—did not brighten his home ; but I loved him, I loved him ! O, spare him till he knows that ! Try me with want, with hunger, so I share it with him ; drive me from a home, so I find one in his arms—so there I confess my sin and hear his pardon. O, let it not be too late, not too late, not too late !

Miss L. Heaven grant it !

Clara. [*Rising suddenly.*] I must go now.

Dex. Whither ?

Clara. To know the worst—to the railway—to Scotland ! I must be with him living ; or, if—if—[*She stops overpowered.*] Ay, even then with him—still mine, still mine !
[*She goes out.*]

Dex. Do not follow, Miss Lindsay ; leave her to herself.
[*Takes her hand.*]

Miss L. O, Mr Dexter, the train must have been in long ere this !

Dex. I fear so ; another train is more than due now—the express. It may bring tidings ! I will go with Mrs Lindsay and must seek a conveyance.

Miss L. Bless you, bless you ! [DEXTER goes out.] David's name not in the list of saved—the same boat, no doubt of that—his train arrived without him—O proof upon proof ! And he so good, so—[*Bursts into tears.*] I must not think of it—not while she's here. What, so soon !
[*Observing CLARA.*]

Re-enter CLARA, shawled and prepared to start.

Clara. I'm ready. Where's Mr Dexter ?

Miss L. He'll be back directly. [CLARA moves dreamily about the room.] Compose yourself, love.

Clara. [*Sinking into a chair.*] Yes ; I'm quiet now. I don't think heaven will take him till I have his forgiveness. Often I yearned to ask it ; but, O wretched pride, I doubted his love—thought he should speak first ; and so, I waited—waited—gambled with death !

Miss L. Not these thoughts.

Clara. O, you're wrong ; let me feel remorse—feel it to the heart's core ! If I did not suffer, would heaven have mercy ?
[*Pause.*]

Re-enter DEXTER.

Miss L. [To CLARA.] Mr Dexter !

Clara. [Turning to him.] Well ; shall we go.

Dex. There's no conveyance yet.

Clara. We'll walk then.

Dex. The distance is too great ; besides, we need not start yet.

Clara. Not yet !

Dex. Another train, the express, has arrived. I shall have news soon.

Clara. News !

Dex. As to the truth of the report.

Clara. Report ! Bless you ! bless you ! only report !

Dex. Not confirmed yet, as regards Lindsay.

Clara. I almost think—don't tell me if I'm wrong—I almost think you've a hope. The express arrived ! You've seen some one ?

Dex. Yes ; a friend at the door.

Clara. Well.

Dex. He merely placed in my hands this small packet.

Clara. Not a letter ?

Dex. No—no letter. I begged him, though, to procure what fresh information he could and return at once.
[CLARA turns dejectedly away—apart to MISS LINDSAY.]
Command yourself, Miss Lindsay ; my friend has already news of your brother.

Miss L. What news ?

Dex. My friend will break it himself. When I think she can bear it, I shall give him a signal to enter—a light in the window.

Clara. [Returning.] What means this whispering ?

Dex. I was about to open this packet ; look.

Miss L. Oh, not now, Mr Dexter, not now.

Clara. [*With keen scrutiny.*] You can talk about trifles !

Dex. See before you judge. What if it should be some token—some dear memorial—some pledge of hope ?

Clara. Open it !

Dex. [*Opening packet.*] 'Tis a morocco case ! What does it contain ? [*Touching the spring.*] A portrait !—ay, a precious talisman. It saved my friend—Nay—forbear ! It will surprise you. [*Lets her take it.*]

Clara. Myself ! My gift to Margaret ! It came from Dunloch. Who brought it ? Who ? Smiles through your tears ; you'd never smile if there were doubt. Speak ! I can bear it. He's here ! here !

Miss L. [*Supporting her.*] Clara !

Dex. I may give my signal.

[*He places light in window, immediately after which DAVID'S peculiar knock is heard.*]

Clara. [*Drawing herself up and clasping her hands.*] Ah ! 'tis his step !—nearer !—nearer ! Let me go !

Enter DAVID.

Clara. David ! Husband ! [*She bursts away, and falls on his neck.*]

David. Clara !

[*He embraces her, she grasps his hands, draws him to his chair, places him in it ; then sinks on her knees by his side.*]

Clara. Forgive me ! forgive me ! forgive me !

David. You too must pardon.

Clara. I have not deserved this ! Saved !

David. Yes ; after heaven, by my wife. [*Both rise.*] See, sister ! see friend ! here was my talisman. [*Taking miniature from CLARA.*] I had left it in my haste—discovered my loss when on board—sent for it ; but in vain. I could not part from it ; at the last moment I leaped on shore. The vessel passed—passed on her fated way ; but I—I—was spared !

Clara. And to me ! [*Looking at miniature.*] This face—ah ! may all that you once saw in it—sweetness, devotion, patience, all that have been but dreams of your fancy, now become——

David. [*Folding her to his breast.*] What they are—
Home Truths !

END OF THE WIFE'S PORTRAIT.

A HARD STRUGGLE.

A Domestic Drama.

IN ONE ACT.

A Hard Struggle.

*First performed at the ROYAL LYCEUM THEATRE, on
February, 1858.*

CHARACTERS.

MR TREVOR, <i>a rich farmer</i>	. .	Mr BARRETT.
REUBEN HOLT, <i>Mr Trevor's ward</i>	. .	Mr CHAS. DILLON.
FERGUS GRAHAM, <i>surgeon</i>	. .	Mr J. G. SHORE.
LILIAN TREVOR, <i>betrothed to Reuben</i>	. .	Mrs CHAS. DILLON.
AMY, <i>Mr Trevor's orphan grandchild,</i> aged 13	Miss CONQUEST.
LANDLADY OF THE OLD SWAN	. .	Mrs MELVILLE.
SUSAN, <i>Mr Trevor's maid-servant</i>	. .	Miss TURTLE.

*Scene—Partly at Mr Trevor's house in the country ; partly at
an inn in the neighbourhood.*

A HARD STRUGGLE.

SCENE I.

Drawing-room of Mr Trevor's house—the Grange; a lawn and part of the grounds are seen through the window, which opens upon a conservatory at back of stage.

MR TREVOR *is seated, reading a newspaper aloud and pronouncing many of the words incorrectly and with hesitation.*

Tre. "In brief, the magnificence of the late flower-show at Uppingham was without par-are-lel (parallel), whether we regard the exquisite specimens of hor-ti-cul-tu-ral science themselves, or the unrivalled display of fashion and a-ris-tocracy congregated from all quarters of the—vi-nis-i-ty (vicinity)." Ah, that's something like style; that's real elegant language, just to my taste! "Hor-ti-cul-tu-ral" is a capital word; so is "par-are-lel;" so is "vi-nis-i-ty;" I must make a note of 'em. [*He takes out tablets—shouts of laughter are heard from the grounds—he looks through window.*] What's that? Reuben and Amy again! Why, I declare he's letting her chase him up and down just as if he was a child like herself! He's as much a boy as when his poor father died and left him to my care.

REUBEN *bursts in through the window; AMY follows and catches him.*

Amy. [*Laughing.*] Caught! caught! I'm out of breath, Reuben, I'm out of breath! My side aches so!

Reu. Yes, lassie, I think that will do for one turn.

Amy. Grandpapa, it wasn't fair; he let himself be caught just to please me.

Tre. Reuben, I'm amazed! If any of the gentry in the *vi-nis-i-ty* had seen you!

Reu. What then?—They would have seen me making fun for a dear little girl, who wanted a playmate.

Tre. My good fellow, this will never do. I know you've many good points. You've helped me to manage the farm, excellently. There's not an acre but what's made the most of; not a shed on the estate out of repair. But really you must give up these strange concentric habits. Remember that my daughter Lilian, whom I sent to Madeira for her health, comes back to us next month—

Reu. Ay, and well, thank heaven!

Tre. That you're engaged to her, and that you'll soon be married.

Reu. Do you think I'm likely to forget that, sir?

Tre. Why hardly; as you've been betrothed since you were boy and girl together. Consider that though I was at first a small farmer, we're now rising people, entitled to move in a super-incumbent sphere. You must get rid of your shyness, go into company, learn how to converse, sir. Look at me! I never meet with a gentlemanly word in a newspaper or pamphlet, but I instantly make a note of it, and add to my concatenation.

Reu. [*Cheerfully.*] Talk's not in my line, sir; I'm not glib at words.

Tre. Don't say *glib*, there's a dear boy. You should follow gentlemanly sports—carry your rod and line, for instance.

Reu. What! to cheat silly fishes out of their lives with mock flies!

Tre. Pooh! shoot, then!

Reu. No; powder and shot have so much the best of a bird, there's no fair play in that.

Tre. Well, you can hunt.

Reu. Hunt! What, when poor Reynard hasn't a

chance? for if he gets to cover one time, he's sure to be killed the next. Hunt! Why, if it was a tiger in a jungle, and I saw death in his glaring eyes; or if it was to stalk down a desert lion—I here, he there—a strong man, against a strong beast—a life against a life—why, perhaps, I might take to it.

[AMY *steals up to* REUBEN, *and places her hand in his.*

Tre. Well, you can talk when you've a mind; but it's very rough, very rough! You must really inform when you're married to Lilian. However, I must abscond now. Old Stocks wants me to take his son as groom, and I've promised him an auditory.

[*He takes his hat, and goes out by window.*

Amy [*Playfully imitating* TREVOR.] Promised him an auditory.

Reu. Stop, Amy! Never mimic your grandpapa; he was your mother's father.

Amy [*Earnestly.*] I'm very sorry; forgive me.

Reu. Yes, pet; but don't do it again. [*Kisses her.*

Amy. Indeed I won't.

Reu. That creeper's loose, Amy. [*Takes up a hammer.*] Just give me the list and the nails; we must have all tidy for Aunt Lily. [*He nails up a creeper by the entrance of conservatory.*] There it comes down! I've broken it off. Clumsy fellow! What have such hands as mine to do with flowers?

Amy. You're not clumsy, although you choose to say so. Now, Reuben, shall I tell you what you always put me in mind of?

Reu. [*Laughing, and throwing himself into a chair.*] Why a great furze-bush, that can touch nothing without tearing it.

Amy. You know better, sir. You're like the great elm-tree yonder. When I try to clasp its broad trunk, I say, "Elm-tree, how strong you are!—just like Reuben." And when I look up at its green leaves, and see the sun come through them, not fierce, but soft and gentle, I say,

"Elm-tree, how kind you are!—that's like Reuben again."

Reu. Nonsense, chatterbox! [*She jumps on his knee.*

Amy. Hush! It's of no use playing at hide-and-seek with me. I know who's gentle and good. I know who took the poor poacher-lad for a servant, and made him honest by kindness. I know who rode twenty miles through a snow-storm to get news of poor Lucy Thompson's sailor boy. I know who has been brother and father to somebody who loves him as if he were both.

[*Kisses him.*

Reu. Silence, prater! All that's rough about me is my own. [*In an undertone as to himself.*] If there's anything better, it's the work of another.

Amy. [*Hearing him.*] And if she made you good, she ought to be pleased with her work. And so she will be. O Reuben, to think of your being married! And yet, I can't tell why, sometimes I don't feel glad of it. I know that's naughty. What joy to think that Aunt Lilian's coming home—coming home well, though we thought she would die, like my own dear mother.

Reu. Hush, hush, dear!

Amy. Oh, if there could be a little window before your heart, that she could see through! For although she loves you so, still I should like her to know how very good you've grown since she went. Oh, if you would only talk to people, that they might know what you really are!

Reu. They won't know by my talking, then. I leave fine speeches to folks who write plays and stories, and such like trash.

Amy. [*Drawing from his coat pocket a rather worn volume.*] And so, sir, you hide your trash there! How often have I caught you reading it! It's the very story Aunt Lilian used to tell me. I never quite liked it, though. The people were so naughty to each other at last; though they'd been little man and wife from children, just like you and Aunt Lilian. Oh, see! here's the postman coming up the walk. Let me run and see what he has got.

Reu. Off she goes, then. [*He kisses her—AMY runs out, he takes up book, and gazes on title page.*] “Lilian Trevor!”—Her own dear name, written by herself—so light, so delicate, it seems like looking at her. I wonder at times that she could ever love a coarse, awkward fellow like me. I suppose it was being used to me. We lived in this house together when we wore pinafores. To think that next month she’ll be here!

Amy. [*Bursting into the room with a letter.*] It’s for you; guess from whom! It ought to have been here before. See, it’s marked “too late!”

[*REUBEN takes the letter, and remains looking at the address.*]

Amy. [*Clapping her hands impatiently.*] Do open it, there’s a dear!

Reu. From *her*! why, she ought now to be at sea. If it should be to say that she’s not coming—that she’s again ill! [*He compares the direction with the handwriting in the book.*] See how trembling the handwriting looks beside this. She is ill!

[*He opens the letter with an effort, and reads—*

“SOUTHAMPTON, Tuesday.

“MY VERY DEAR REUBEN,—This date will surprise you; I myself can hardly believe that I am once more in England. I met with an unlooked-for chance of leaving Madeira; and I know that neither my dear father, yourself, nor my little Amy will be sorry to see me sooner than you expected.

“I am a little tired with my journey; but do not suppose I am ill. To-morrow I take the rail home, and shall be with you by noon. Bless you all.

“Your ever affectionate, LILIAN TREVOR.”

What can it mean? “Southampton, Tuesday!”—the words ring like bells in my ears; but I can’t catch the sense. [*Glancing again over the letter.*] “Southampton—Tuesday—an unlooked-for chance of leaving Madeira—the rail home—be with you by noon!” [*He stands silent;*

then turns suddenly and catches AMY'S arm.] This is you, Amy?

Amy. Of course it is, dear. How happy we shall be!

Reu. That's right. I ask; you answer. There's the hammer on the floor, and the list I was nailing round the plants. It's all real! And so she's—— [*Pausing.*]

Amy. Coming home.

Reu. When?

Amy. She wrote on Tuesday—yesterday. Why, it must be to-day!

Reu. Coming home to-day! Bless you for saying it! I know it now; but till you said so I couldn't take it in. And by noon! [*Looks at the letter, then at his watch.*] Why, it's near noon already.

Amy. Well, let's tell grandpapa, and go to the station to meet her.

Reu. Yes, yes; let me tell him, though. Run and get your hat. [*AMY goes out.*] At noon to-day! Oh, shame on me; I'm almost afraid to see her! It will be the old tale when she comes back; I shan't have a word to say for myself.

Enter MR TREVOR, with a letter.

Tre. Reuben, I must beg your attention. I've just received a most consequential letter.

Reu. So have I, sir.

Tre. We'll talk of yours by and by. Mine is about the family pedagogue, and therefore the most important.

Reu. Ha, ha! You think so?

Tre. Yes; it's on matters connected with our family.

Reu. So is mine.

Tre. Reuben, I mean the old family tree.

Reu. Well, I mean a branch of it.

Tre. Indeed; I've distinct information as to two of my missing pro—pro—— What's the word? [*Refers to the letter.*] Oh, about two of my missing progenitors.

Reu. And I've distinct information as to one of your missing progeny.

Tre. Progenitors, sir ; they write it so at the Herald's College.

Reu. Confound the Herald's College ! Forgive me, sir : I speak of the living, not of the dead.

Tre. Calm yourself ; a gentleman should never be incitable.

Reu. A man may be, though. Mr Trevor, father—ay, let me say, father,—she's coming ! she's in England.

Tre. She ! Who ?

Reu. Read—read !

[*He thrusts LILIAN'S letter into MR TREVOR'S hand.*]

Tre. [*Reading.*] What, from Lilian ! Lilian, back again—at noon ! Why, that means noon, to-day. What, my own precious girl ! Thou'rt right, lad ; thy news was best ; worth a bushel of mine. Hang the Herald's College ! [*Casts his own letter away, slaps REUBEN heartily on the shoulder.*] Come, look alive ; let's be off to the station ! Thou can ride the bay cob, and I'll drive the mare. Dang it, come along, come along ! I'm not safe i' the house, I tell thee ; I shall go up to the ceiling like a champagne cork. [*Whirling REUBEN to the window.*]

Reu. [*Laughing.*] Oh, but you know a gentleman's never excited.

Tre. Why, here's Amy ready.

Enter AMY attired for a drive.

And what do I see ? Why, Reuben, we're too late ! Here comes a fly bowling up the drive—a fly with luggage on the roof.

Reu. [*Retreating a few steps.*] So soon !

Tre. Why, man, what art thou skulking to the rear for in that way ? Come out and welcome her. Hark ! the fly has stopped. Lily, my own Lily ! [*He rushes out.*]

Amy. Come, Reuben. [*Attempts to drag him out.*]

Reu. Leave me to myself a bit.

Amy. No, I shan't.

Re-enter MR TREVOR, with LILIAN.

Tre. Here she is, here she is—blessings on her!

[Embracing her.]

Lil. Dear, dear father! Reuben!

[REUBEN takes her hand between both of his, and kisses it.]

Tre. Her lips, her lips, boy! Thou won't?

Lil. Then Amy must give me a double one.

Amy. That she will, dear Aunt Lily. Now, I'm mistress; sit down. *[She takes LILIAN'S shawl and bonnet.]*

Reu. *[Placing a footstool.]* And thou'rt well—quite well, Lilian?

Tre. Well! to be sure she is. Now, if we only had her brother back from America.

Lil. What news of Fred?

Tre. All right and hearty. Fred will be here by winter. But I did expect, lass, thou would have brought back a pair of rosier cheeks.

Lil. *[After a short pause, and speaking with sudden animation.]* Rosy cheeks, indeed! What does my father take me for, Amy! What does he expect of a young lady after a long sea voyage, a night made sleepless by the thought of seeing you all, and eighty miles travelling by express? Isn't it hard, that when I thought to surprise him by my strength, he should scold me for not blooming like a peony? *[She rises, seizes MR TREVOR'S hands, and playfully swings them together, then turns to REUBEN with a sort of impetuous gaiety.]* And what do you think of me, Reuben?

Reu. What do I think of you? Why, you must know pretty well by this time. No; perhaps you don't. *[Getting confused.]* That is, nobody knows—I mean—pshaw!

Tre. Well, and our kind friends at Madeira, who took charge of thee—the Maxwells? Thou left 'em all tidy, eh? And the young surgeon, Fergus Graham, who attended thee on the passage out, when thou caught the fever with the rest? A brave fellow that; he seems to have cared neither for his sleep nor his life.

Reu. Ay, tell us of Fergus Graham.

[LILIAN sinks into a chair.

Tre. Why, what ails thee?

Reu. [*Alarmed.*] Lilian!

Lil. [*Rallying, with a forced laugh.*] You make me quite ashamed. It was but a thought.

Tre. Ay, of her past danger. What an old fool I was to put her in mind of it! Why, Amy we're all forgetting that your aunty's nearly famished. Run and order luncheon.

[AMY goes out.

Lil. No—indeed I'm not hungry; only a little tired.

Tre. Come, then, Reuben; let's leave her to herself for half an hour: she'll have her little knick-knacks to settle, and such like. [*With a return to his pompous manner.*] Remain here, love, while I send your maid to conduct you to your own apartment. She's an excellent, well-meaning sort of young woman; but I mean to engage for you a regular ed-u-cated French feminine-de-chamber straight from Paris—a Frenchwoman who talks French. By-bye, love—by-bye, love! [*Kisses his hand to her, and goes out.*

Reu. Don't tire yourself, Lilian—please don't. Don't come down to lunch if it's too much for you.

Lil. Thoughtful for me as ever, dear Reuben.

[*She holds out her hand—REUBEN again kisses it.*

Reu. [*Aside.*] I'm not good enough for her—I know I'm not.

[*He hastily follows MR TREVOR out.*

Lil. [*Who looks fixedly after them.*] They are gone—gone at last! Oh that ever I should feel it a relief, for my father, for Reuben to leave me: so good, so loving as they are! [*A pause.*] Oh, if I could be already old and torpid! If the hours would but pass over me as over yon dial, that tells, but does not feel, the flight of time! Or if my own mother had lived, and I could have told her my struggle! Oh, shame, shame! is this my firmness? Let me reflect that I am Reuben's betrothed—that I became so by my own will—that I had strength to fly from that fatal land while there was yet time. Yes; Heaven help me, and I shall conquer.

Enter SUSAN.

Susan. A gentleman has called, ma'am. I think he be a stranger in these parts ; but he's very pressing to see you.

Lil. Indeed.

Susan. It's most likely some one from the railway station ; for all your luggage arn't up yet, and he asked particular if you was come home.

Lil. I daresay you're right. Let him come in.

Susan. Yes, ma'am. [*She goes out, and immediately returns.*] The gentleman, ma'am.

Enter FERGUS GRAHAM.

Fer. An old friend.

Lil. Fergus ! Mr Graham !

Fer. My presence here is indeed sudden, perhaps abrupt, dear Miss Trevor ; but, let me hope not quite unwelcome. [*Taking her hand.*]

Lil. [*Commanding herself.*] A friend to whom I owe so much can never be unwelcome. [*She motions him to a chair and takes one herself.*] But I was, as you may judge, unprepared for this pleasure.

Fer. It was only a few days since that I heard in Paris of your sudden departure from Madeira. I had half expected, as you know, to find you still there on my return. Thinking that you had by this time probably reached England, I could not resist the impulse to see you—to see you in your home. You had given me your address here.

Lil. It was a kind and friendly impulse.

Fer. Friendly ! Yes. And yet that word poorly describes it. Friendly applies to acts that consult the happiness of another ; mine involved my own—all, all, Lilian, that I have at stake in life.

Lil. Nay ; life has so many stakes—at least for men.

Fer. [*Drawing his chair towards her.*] Can you misinterpret me ? You know that in Madeira I was privi-

leged to enter the house where you dwelt, as if I had been of the family. You have not forgotten those morning walks, when our common love of nature was a tie between us ; when I bent over you as you sketched some bold headland, or caught some rare effect of sea and sky ; or the nights when you were my scholar, and we read together some poet of our dear England, or some lay of Italy ?

Lil. No, Fergus, I have not forgotten how kindly you taught me—how you enriched the life that you had first saved.

Fer. Our tastes were one, our sympathies one. At times I dared to hope our hearts also. Yet I trembled to speak. Then business called me from Madeira to France. She shall know all, I thought, on my return. You quitted Madeira suddenly. When I heard of it—heard that you might already be in England, I left Paris at once. And now I am here—here to say—ah, do you not divine what ? Lilian, I love you !

Lil. Fergus, you have spoken ! I have ever, must ever honour and value you ; but those words part us.

Fer. Part us ? Has hope, then, so deceived me ? May not a time come ?

Lil. Never ! If, indeed, you care for me, leave—leave me at once.

Fer. Pause, Lilian ; those brief words of yours strike at a life's dream. Weigh them well. If it must be, I accept my fate. You do not, then—cannot love me ?

Lilian. [*Rising.*] Go, go ! I—can never—be yours.

Fer. Because you do not love me ? [*A pause.*] Ah, you do not say that !

Lilian. Leave me, I say, at once ; unless you would bring a curse upon the life that you preserved.

Fer. One word first. You tremble ; this vehemence is not indifference. Say either, that you cannot love me, or if there be any barrier that you may not yet speak of,—one, that time, however long, may remove,—tell me, and I will wait—wait, even till years have blanched my hair

—changed me in all except what cannot change, my abiding, quenchless love !

[He throws himself at her feet, and seizes her hand ; here AMY appears at the entrance of the conservatory.]

Lilian. *[Almost fiercely.]* Leave me, sir ! I am not at confession. When a woman does not admit her love, I presume that she denies it. Release my hand ! leave me, I command you ! *[Breaking away from him. AMY retires.]*

Fer. *[Rising and speaking with mournful dignity.]* I obey you. You have spoken now. The friend, Lilian, may still think of you, though the lover dares not. Bless you ! *[Aside, as she stands with her face averted.]* What ! not even a look ? Farewell ! farewell !

[He takes up a light travelling coat, and goes out slowly.]

Lilian. He goes—goes without one kind word ! Repulsed so fiercely, how heartless must he think me ! He will return to the scenes where we were happy friends. We shall meet no more. That might be borne—should be. But that I should never cross his memory, except as an image of pain and ingratitude, that I should lose all place in his esteem—Oh, 'tis bitter—bitter ! He will never know what I stifle here. Years will roll on, death will come, and even then, he will never—never——

[She totters, and is on the point of falling.]

Enter REUBEN, by the window ;—with a cry she throws herself into his arms.

Reu. Lilian ! dear Lilian ! Why, what is this ? Speak to me, my own, my darling ! She has fainted ; she must have air. Help ! help ! *[He bears her out.]*

Enter MR TREVOR, meeting AMY, who comes from the conservatory.

Tre. What cry was that ? It threw me into a state of positive conjuration. _

Amy. Don't be frightened, grandpapa. I hope aunty will soon be better.

Tre. Better?

Amy. Something happened to her. I saw it by chance, and——

Tre. Where is she? Where is Reuben?

Amy. With her; he took her into the garden. Oh, pray don't go, dear grandpapa; the sight of you might be too much for her.

Tre. Why, how you cling to me, child; and you're shaking like a leaf! What has happened?

Amy. Oh, nothing very bad; nothing that I quite understand.

Tre. What did you see?

Amy. Aunt Lilian will tell you; but not now, dear grandpapa; don't ask her now.

Tre. You'll drive me out of my senses. Let me go!

Amy. Nay, look, here is Reuben!

Re-enter REUBEN.

Reu. Lilian's better now, sir; the air did her good. I left her with Susan, who will take her to her room. She begged me to tell you that she was but over-tired, and should soon be herself.

Tre. That's well. She's had enough to upset her. But Amy spoke of some accident. What did you see, Amy?

Amy. It was so strange. I'm afraid to say.

Reu. [*Patting her head encouragingly.*] Amy will tell me, if she ever loved Reuben.

Amy. Then, I think aunty has had a fright.

Reu. A fright!

Amy. I was in the conservatory, and had pulled a nose-gay for her. I was just coming into the room, when——

Reu. Yes; go on, love.

Amy. I saw a gentleman—a stranger. Aunt Lilian was ordering him to leave the house; so, I suppose he had done something wrong.

Reu. [*Repressing MR TREVOR, who attempts to speak.*] So—well?

Amy. But he wouldn't go—not then. He threw himself on his knees, and grasped her hand—oh, so tight! I suppose that was what hurt her. I went back again, for I didn't like her to see me; but I just saw her look very angry, and tear herself away from him. She again ordered him to leave her, and spoke so—oh, I never heard her angry before! Then I heard him go up the walk, and your voice, Reuben, and what you said when you came in; and that's all that I know.

Reu. He dared to insult her?

Amy. I'm afraid so; else why did she speak so loud?

Tre. The pertinacious rascal!

Reu. Leave him to me, sir. This man, Amy, what did he look like?

Amy. Why like a young man. He didn't look wicked, though I'm afraid he was.

Reu. Young, you say?

Amy. Yes.

Reu. What height?

Amy. About yours, but slenderer.

Reu. What did he wear?

Amy. Nothing particular—Yes, I saw his light overcoat on a chair.

Reu. The very man I met in the avenue; he had such a coat on his arm. That's enough!

[*Seizes his hat and riding whip.*]

Amy. Stay, Reuben!—You'll not hurt him?

Reu. Let me but catch him.

Amy. [*Intercepting him.*] You know how often, when I was naughty, you said "Treat her gently, and she'll mend." Ah, treat him gently! Besides, Aunt Lilian's better.

Reu. [*Muttering to himself.*] He dared to insult her!

Tre. [*Seizing REUBEN'S arm.*] Yes; Lilian's better. Don't thrash him, Reuben; that's low. What if he should be one of those dashing young sparks from London,

on a visit in the neighbourhood? If so, you might call him out, my boy. A duel would set the family on its legs. It's perfectly gentlemanly, quite illegitimate, and not at all dangerous.

Reu. [Disregarding him.] He turned to the right. He would get out through the copse by the oat-field into the Uppingham Road. Ay, that's the scent; now for the chase!

[He breaks from MR TREVOR, and darts out at full speed.]

Tre. [Disconsolately.] Come, Amy! Let's hear Susan's news of your aunt. *[To himself.]* As for that boy, he has no grand sentiments; he suffers from a complete vaccination of gentlemanly ideas, and will do nothing to extirpate the family honour! But he has a good heart—a good heart; so I suppose I must be intolerable to him. Come, Amy! *[He leads her out.]*

SCENE II.

Room in the Old Swan at Uppingham; an open bay-window looks upon the road.

Enter FERGUS GRAHAM and LANDLADY.

Fer. That will do, landlady; that will do. Have the goodness to order the fly at once.

Land. [Aside.] Why, he don't ask for his change; and there's two shillings back out of his half-sovereign for the fly. I wonder whether it's good? *[Testing the half-sovereign.]* Yes, it is. Your change, sir.

Fer. Give it to your servant, my good woman; but do order the fly.

Land. Why, you'll be at the station an hour before the train, sir.

Fer. No matter; I wish to start at once.

Land. [Nettled.] Oh, of course, sir, if you prefer the station waiting-room to the parlour of the Swan. Every gentleman has a right to his taste. *[She goes out.]*

Fer. [*Walking up and down.*] Motion! Action! I cannot bear to think. If it had only been that I mistook her feelings, and that she refused me, why, that would have been a shock; but I could have endured it. I could still have honoured her, trusted in her. But to be ordered from her presence so disdainfully—even fiercely—as if the best homage of my heart were an insult to her! [*A pause.*] And yet, she was once so gentle—so fearful of giving pain! Is it possible that she can be so utterly transformed? Was it indeed disdain, or was it misery, that I read in her face? What if there should be some dark mystery over her fate that she dares not even hint at? I would believe that—anything—rather than that she could be capricious and cruel. [*Walking to the window he observes REUBEN without, gazing on him with a stern and fixed expression.*] Who's that? [*After a pause REUBEN moves away.*] That man's face quite riveted me. [*He turns and perceives REUBEN, who has entered, and stands with a menacing look at the door of the apartment, then locks it, takes the key, and walking steadily up to the table, confronts FERGUS in silence. After a pause, with haughty calmness.*] You mistake a house of public entertainment for your private dwelling. Why have you locked that door?

Reu. That you may not go out without my leave.

Fer. [*Aside.*] The man must be insane. I'll deal with him firmly, but quietly. My friend, I must trouble you for that key.

Reu. Not yet. You're the young man who left Mr Trevor's house awhile back?

Fer. The same, sir.

Reu. You own it—the coward who broke into a lady's presence, insulted her, shocked her by his violence.

Fer. Have a care. At first I thought you a madman, and you have been safe; but there is coherence even in your falsehood. Do you dare——

Reu. [*Breaking in.*] Do *you* dare—you who stole* in upon a woman alone, who laid hands on her till her cries

of anger and fear were heard ! Is it for you to say—dare ?

Fer. What do you mean ?

Reu. [*Brandishing his whip.*] Mean ! To give you a lesson.

Fer. Stand back ! stand back ! or you shall rue to your last hour that you ever raised you hand to Fergus Graham.

Reu. [*Who drops the horsewhip, and stands arrested.*] Who ? who ? Fergus—Fergus Graham ?

Fer. Leave the room.

Reu. [*Going to the door, unlocking it, and returning.*] Stay ! you're not—not the young doctor who saved Lilian's life at sea ?

Fer. My name is Fergus Graham ; you should have asked it before.

Reu. Sir, I humbly, humbly entreat your pardon. You could not have insulted her. Yet she fainted in my arms as you went. How came that ?

Fer. By what right do you ask ?

Reu. By the right of one who has been bred up under the same roof with her ; her playmate in childhood, her protector now—one who has the right of a brother.

Fer. Her brother ! She has often spoken of you ; but I thought you were abroad.

Reu. No, no ; you mistake. I'm not Fred.

Fer. [*Courteously.*] Pardon me ; I was not aware that Miss Trevor had a second brother.

Reu. [*Aside, half amused.*] Why, I can't blab my heart's secrets to a stranger, and say, I'm her lover. Let him call me what he likes.

Fer. Be seated, sir. And so she complained to you of my intrusion ?

Reu. She ! O never ! But she was heard bidding you from the house. You were seen to force her hand.

Fer. To take it. I will be frank with you. I sought your sister's hand for my own. Heaven knows with what reverence.

Reu. [*Aside.*] He loved her, then—he loved her ! Poor fellow, how could he help it?—Mr Graham, I feel for you. Take my hand—that is, if you can really forgive me.

Fer. [*Shaking his hand warmly.*] Freely.

Reu. Still I can't make it out. There could be no offence in an offer like yours. Yet why did she bid you begone? why sink fainting into my arms?

Fer. Did it cost her so much, then? [*Moves his chair nearer to REUBEN'S, and continues in a low, earnest voice.*] Do not think me presumptuous; but I have dared to think——

Reu. [*Authoritatively.*] Stop ! I'll hear no more. I've no right to——

Fer. [*Persisting.*] To think that, after all, Lilian may still love me.

Reu. [*Compassionately.*] No, my dear fellow, you mustn't think that; you mustn't, indeed.

Fer. I will never breathe that hope without warrant; but still——

Reu. No more, I beg. Sure, Lilian refused you?

Fer. Ay, but her agitation; her trembling form; her look of wretchedness, that I at first took for anger——

Reu. Again, I say, I've no right to your secrets.

Fer. Nay, you shall hear me. What if there should be some mystery?

Reu. [*Laying his hand soothingly on GRAHAM'S shoulder.*] You mustn't give way to this. What mystery can there be?

Fer. Fathers, before now, have forced children to marry against their will.

Reu. Ah, that's not her case.

Fer. Or, there have been—forgive the hope that would clutch at a straw—there have been such things as childish engagements—engagements made before the young heart knew what love meant, yet which a cruel, a false honour bound it to keep. Ah, that's a bitter wrong to both !

Reu. [*Sharply.*] What's that to do with Lilian?

Fer. I can't say ; very likely nothing. But she had lived long in retirement. It was only in Madeira—she told me so—that she first seemed to live. It is not only for myself I care. Put me out of the question ; but, oh ! if any chance should bind her to one who could not understand her refined, gentle nature,—to one with whom she would suffer, die, uncomplainingly !

Reu. Silence, man ! What d'ye take us for—us rough country-folk ? We mayn't know much of books ; we may be out-of-place in drawing-rooms,—we with the sun's tan on our faces, and the ploughed land on our heels ; but when joy comes,—when grief comes,—we've hearts that bound, or burst. We've that which makes man, man,—love to God and each other !

Fer. Right, right. I was selfish and unjust. *You* must forgive now.

Reu. Enough, enough ! I don't care for soft phrases. [*Walks away, seizes his gloves, and confusedly attempts to draw the left one on his right hand ; then speaks aside.*] What if I should seem a mere rude loon to her, now she's seen the world and fine people ! Oh, no, no !

Fer. I have one more request——

Reu. Whist, whist ! my head's too full for talk. [*Aside.*] I uttered his name this morning ; she turned ashy pale. I thought she would have dropped. Why was that ?

Fer. [*Looking at his watch.*] I've but a short time now.

Reu. [*Still aside.*] Dolt that I am ! She was overdone by seeing us. What more natural ? [*Turning cheerfully to FERGUS.*] I tell you what, Mr Graham, you must forget this folly. Work hard ; root it out. Come back to us in a year or so. Who knows but she'll be married then, and you'll meet her as her friend,—her husband's friend ? We'll mount you well, give you a morning gallop over hill and moor, find you a seat at night by the winter fire. We shall be as merry as the day's long. Come, come ; you'll forget all else !

Fer. If *she* forgets. Yet——

Reu. [*Again walking away, and aside.*] If ! He doubts it still. And I,—do I doubt too? How if it should be true? What did she tell him?—That till she got to Madeira she had never lived. What threw her into that state when he left her? It couldn't be hate. He was her dear friend,—had saved her life. If not hate, what was it then? [*Walks a step or two, then resumes.*] Suppose she had gone in love with him, and felt bound by duty to me—ah ! that would explain it.

Fer. [*Approaching him.*] One parting word.

Reu. [*Fiercely.*] You've said too much ! You've put a thought into my heart that burns and rankles ; and when I would tug it out, it goes deeper and deeper !

Fer. I ?

Reu. You !

Fer. I'm sorry to part with you so.

[*REUBEN waves him off ; FERGUS silently takes up his travelling-coat.*]

Reu. [*Suddenly seizing his arm.*] Stay ! You said there was some mystery here. You shall not go till it's cleared up. I will know why Lilian bade you from the house.

Fer. [*With quiet dignity.*] Remove your hand ! I shall not shrink from inquiry. I will change my plans, and wait your return here.

Reu. You will go back with me ?

Fer. If you wish it.

Reu. I will speak to her first alone. If I find—Your fly's at the door. You had better go and countermand it.

Fer. I will do so.

[*He goes out.*]

Reu. He has deceived himself. Yes, yes ; all will be well ! But—but—— [*He stops short, greatly agitated.*] I won't be mastered ! I will look it in the face ! But if not—if not—why, then I shall have cut out doubt for ever from my heart.

[*Rushes out.*]

SCENE III.

Drawing-room in Mr Trevor's house.—Same as First Scene.

Enter MR TREVOR and LILIAN.

Tre. But thou shouldn't have come down, Lily ; thou really shouldn't.

Lil. Indeed, dear father, I am better. [*Aside.*] Oh, for strength for one brave effort ! [*He places a chair for her.*

Tre. Well, thou must get up thy good looks, dear ; for thou'lt be queen of the neighbourhood, now thou'rt back again. [*Sitting by her.*] Thou knows thy promise that thou'lt never leave thy father, even when thou'rt married. It's mostly for thy sake that I've tried to raise the family. I gave a breakfast last winter to the members of the Roxbury Hunt. Sir Richard was here himself, and I never saw a man so abstemious ; he devoured everything that came within his reach. He grew quite urbane, and showed, in fact, the greatest animosity. "You're a trump, Trevor !" said he ; and he positively slapped me on the back ! [*With great complacency.*

Lil. [*Forcing a show of interest.*] And did he ask you to Roxbury, dear father ?

Tre. Why, not in so many words. But the truth is, all was confusion. He had a great conflux of the aristocracy at his house that winter, and—hem !—in fact—I believe there was no beds. But he's coming from London soon, and then——

Lil. Indeed, dear father, I desire no grand acquaintances. Your Lily's content with you and with dear, dear Reuben.

Tre. Ay, ay ! Reuben's a good lad, though he wants polishing up. Anyhow, he deserves well of Lily. You should have seen how he rushed off to punish the fellow whose impertinence alarmed you——

Lil. [*Starting up.*] Punish! Whom?

Tre. Why, the person who obtruded on you this morning.

Lil. [*Excitedly.*] You are jesting!—O, say that you are jesting! Send after them! part them—part them, as you value my peace—my life!

Tre. [*Soothingly.*] Nay, here comes Reuben to speak for himself.

REUBEN, *his eyes fixed on the ground, is seen approaching the open window.*

Lil. [*Darting towards the window.*] Speak before you enter! Is he safe? You have not——

Reu. [*Coming in.*] Not hurt a hair of his head.

[LILIAN *throws her arms round her father.*]

Enter AMY.

Tre. [*To her.*] There, I told thee all would be well. Sit down, love; sit down. [*He leads her apart to a couch.*]

Reu. [*Aside.*] Is he safe? She asked but for him. Well, she would see that I was safe. There was no need to ask about me.

Amy. Do speak to me, Reuben. If you could guess how glad I am to have you again—to know that you've not done wrong!

Reu. [*Takes a chair, places her on his knee, and gazes earnestly into her face.*] Amy, I've a question for you. [*She regards him with wondering attention.*] Suppose, Amy, some one was to steal your love from me.

Amy. Reuben!

Reu. I say, suppose so?

Amy. [*Trembling.*] Oh, what have I done? You know that could never be—never!

Reu. Well, let's put it another way—Suppose any one was to steal my love from you?

Amy. Don't! don't!

Reu. Nay, it's not likely ; but suppose I was to choose another pet—to find some other little face that would make me happier to look on than my Amy's.

Amy. That would make you happier ?

Reu. Suppose so.

Amy. If it did make you happier——

Reu. Well, go on, darling.

Amy. Oh, that would hurt me !—but——

Reu. Yes, yes !

Amy. [*Stifling her sobs.*] I should pray to God ; I should try to think how good you had been to me, how you ought to be happy. And if—if another pet made you so, I should give you up, and try—to love her for your sake.

[*She weeps silently, and covers her face with her hands.*]

Reu. [*Kissing her fervently.*] Bless you, darling ! No fear ! no fear ! Now go, play ; I must have some talk with Aunt Lily. [*Leads her to the door ; AMY goes out. REUBEN then approaches LILIAN.*] Are you well enough, Lilian, to have a short talk with me alone ?

Tre. [*Sharply.*] No she's not. [*Comes up to REUBEN, and speaks to him apart.*] Forgive me, Reuben ; but she's really ill. For all she's so kind and does her best, it's plain she takes no interest in anything.

Lil. [*Rising, and coming to them.*] Father, I am well enough to talk with Reuben. I wish it ; I must.

Tre. Well, thou knows best, Lily ; but I won't have thee overset or flurried. [*Aside.*] She droops just as she did before she went abroad. And such grand things as I was planning for her ! Ah, perhaps that's it. I've been proud and foolish. What if this should be for—for a punishment ! [*To REUBEN.*] Be very tender of her ; she's all that reminds me of her mother ! [*He goes out.*]

Lil. Now, Reuben, you must tell me all. There has been no quarrel ?

Reu. No, Lilian ; rest content about that. But you mustn't stand. [*He places a chair and footstool for her.*] There's a breeze getting up. [*Envelopes her in her shawl ;*

then seats himself by her side.] Lily, I've something to say to you.

Lil. Yes, Reuben.

Reu. There have been a good many changes in this year or more, since you left us. You're changed a bit yourself. The girl's look is gone from you, Lily.

Lil. Yes ; I'm a woman.

Reu. We're always changing, I suppose. The games we played at when children don't amuse us now. Our tastes change ; our likings change.

Lil. As we grow older.

Reu. It's what we must look for. You wouldn't wonder, then, if I was changed too?

Lil. [*After a pause.*] You would never change from being good.

[*Gives him her hand.*]

Reu. Do you know I've often thought of that book you were so fond of ! [*Draws forth the book produced in first scene, and shows it to her.*] I often think of those young folks in the story who were engaged to each other, like you and me. Don't tremble so, or I can't go on.

Lil. [*In a whisper.*] What about them ?

Reu. Well, you see, they didn't know their own minds until they got separated. Then they both found that what they thought love, was—a mistake.

Lil. O Reuben ! what do you mean ? [*He remains silent.*] Have pity on me—you don't know what hangs on it. You don't—you can't mean that you're changed to me ?

Reu. [*Springing from the chair and speaking aside.*] She's afraid of it ! she's afraid of it ! She loves me still ! [*Returning to her.*] And would Lilian find it hard if Reuben was changed to her ?

Lil. [*After a short pause, and turning away her face.*] Very hard, if he thought ill of her.

Reu. That's no answer. Would it cost you much to think I was changed ?

Lil. I cannot bear this !

Reu. [*Smiling.*] You can't bear to think so, eh ? Is that it ? Silent ? Nay, a word will do—a smile. [*In an*

altered tone, and laying his hand on her shoulder.] Lily, I've been honest with you all my life. You'll speak to me truly? What can't you bear?

Lil. To give you pain. I would rather die.

Reu. Do you know anything, then, that would give me pain if I knew it too?

Lil. Reuben! Reuben! this is torture!

Reu. Be calm. It's only a word, and it must come. When we two kneel together in the church—when you take the vow that can't be unsaid—the vow of heart's love till death and after——

Lil. [*Starting up.*] Spare me, spare me! I'm very wretched!

[*She is about to sink at his knees; but he prevents her.*

Reu. My poor child!

Lil. Reuben, I must speak now. I was so young—I had seen no one but you. I had not dreamed that there was another feeling—a master feeling, different from a sister's love—one that is not merely affection, but part of one's self. And it came so unperceived; it dawned on me so softly, rose so gradually, that it was high up, quickening every pulse, mingling with every breath, steeping all life in brightness, before I knew its power—before I felt that when that light was blotted out the whole world would be darkness.

Reu. Well, and then?

Lil. Then came misery. I had not been willingly guilty; but the thought of your great goodness haunted me like remorse. I strove to break the spell, and fled. But I could not fly from myself. And now, Reuben, that you have made me see the truth, I must go on. Spite of all, the fatal power still conquers. And oh, if I once sinned in yielding my love to another, I shrink from a sin yet darker! I cannot, dare not, take a false vow to heaven, and betray the trust of your noble heart.

[*She sinks at his feet.*

Reu. [*Raising her.*] Poor child! poor child!

Lil. What! Can you forgive me?

Reu. Forgive thee! forgive thee! [*Pressing his lips tenderly on her forehead.*] I partly guessed it. You see, by my calmness, I was prepared for it. [*A pause.*] And you! can you bear a surprise?

Lil. What can I not bear, after this?

Reu. Then leave me a little while; take a turn in the garden; take the left path, to the shrubbery. Don't ask why; I may, perhaps, join you soon. [*Folds shawl round her head.*] The path to the shrubbery, remember!

Lil. [*Kissing his hand reverently.*] Bless you!

[*He leads her to window, and watches her in silence till she disappears in the walk.*]

Reu. [*Advancing slowly to front.*] I know the worst! [*Sinks into a chair.*] This is no longer a home for me. Soon, as she passed just now from me down the walk, she'll pass from me for ever. I shall see her no more. Not see her? Oh, yes; see her always. In strange lands she'll flit before my eyes—my own little playmate, with her straw hat and bright curls, her white frock, and the blue sash that I used to tie for her. I shall see her pattering by me as when we plucked the spring primroses. I shall see the young girl, with the warm flush on her cheek, as when I rode beside her pony. I shall see her as to-day, with her graceful movements, and her soft, sad face; and I shall see—ah, there's comfort!—I shall see for ever the smile with which she blessed me! Yes; while I live, the day will never come that I shall not see Lilian.

[*He bursts into tears; then leans back quietly in the chair.*]

Enter AMY bounding in.

Amy. Oh, you're here, Reuben! You promised me a walk, sir. Not a word! Oh, some bad magician has put him to sleep, and I shall be a good fairy to rouse him! Wake, sleeper, wake! [*She playfully raises his arm, which falls listlessly to his side.*] Reuben, what's the matter? It's Amy; your pet, Amy.

Reu. [*Holding her at arm's-length, gazing on her wistfully, then straining her to him.*] Yes, Amy's still mine.

Amy. She'll never leave you ; and Aunt Lilian——

Reu. Aunt Lilian ! [*After a short struggle.*] I've learned Amy's lesson. Aunt Lilian goes away from us—goes, where she'll be happy.

Amy. What ! and leaves you——

Reu. Not wretched. Amy, I might have been a villain, and broken her heart. I've done right ; I've saved her. [*Rises.*] No, not wretched !

Enter LILIAN and FERGUS, then MR TREVOR.

Lil. Reuben, what does this mean ?

Reu. [*Takes the hand of FERGUS, places it in LILIAN'S, and addresses MR TREVOR.*] This is Fergus Graham, Lilian's preserver. He loves her. Your blessing for them. That alone will cure her.

Tre. Fergus Graham ! He loves her ! I see. Reuben, you're a noble fellow.

[*FERGUS silently clasps REUBEN'S hand ; REUBEN walks apart, LILIAN follows them.*]

Lil. [*Laying her hand softly on his arm.*] My own brother !

[*MR TREVOR, FERGUS, and AMY approach them.*]

Reu. You're all very kind to me. I shall think of you often when I'm far away. For I go to a land that asks for a man's pith and sinew ; where there are broad forests to be cleared, wide prairies to roam.

Tre. No, my lad, I can't lose you.

Reu. Thank you ; but my mind's made up.

Lil. [*Imploringly.*] For my sake !

Fer. For our sake !

Reu. I shall think always that you wished it ; but——

[*Shakes his head in dissent.*]

Amy. [*Rushing forward, and grasping the skirts of his coat.*] Reuben, Reuben ! will you leave your own Amy ?

Reu. [*Much moved, and regarding her fixedly.*] Amy, Amy ! pet, darling, comfort ! Oh ! I didn't guess till now the hold she had on me. Leave her ? Heaven, that denies me a wife's love, has perhaps given me its next blessing in the pure love of a child. It's a hard struggle ; but with a clear conscience and her dear help, I shall get through—I shall get through. [*Cheerfully.*] Yes, Amy ; I stay for thee !

[He sinks into a chair, and embraces her fondly.]

END OF A HARD STRUGGLE.

BOROUGH POLITICS:

A Comic Drama,

IN TWO ACTS.

Borough Politics.

*First performed at the Haymarket Theatre, Saturday,
June 27th, 1846.*

CHARACTERS.

NATHAN THOMPSON, . . .	Mr WEBSTER.
DOCTOR NEVILLE, . . .	Mr TILBURY.
FRANK NEVILLE, . . .	Mr HOWE.
FLORID,	Mr BUCKSTONE.
SWEETLIP,	Mr BRINDAL.
JOHN,	Mr CLARK.
TIM,	Mr W. SANTER.
MRS THOMPSON,	Mrs GLOVER.
MRS NEVILLE,	Mrs STANLEY.
MISS THOMPSON,	Mrs EDWIN YARNOLD.

Scene—A country town. Period—1846.

BOROUGH POLITICS.

ACT I., SCENE I.

An apartment in the house of NATHAN THOMPSON. The room is gaudily and absurdly furnished; hung, though summer, with scarlet curtains. The carpet is of an immense pattern, and of glaring colours.

MRS THOMPSON and FANNY, her daughter.

Mrs T. [*Busily disposing the furniture.*] There! I'll have that big what-d'ye-call-it, the hot-man (*ottoman*) set hopposite the door. Now, Miss Fanny, go to the door, just outside—that'll do. Now come in, and tell me how it strikes you.

Fan. Indeed, no one can enter the room without seeing it.

Mrs T. That curtain's looped overmuch; it don't show off as I should like. [*Rearranging it.*] Ay, that's more the thing! [*Languidly seating herself.*] What o'clock, my dear? It must be near two; I wonder when we shall have any calls. [*Ringing.*]

Fan. It has not, I think, struck one.

Enter JOHN.

Mrs T. John! in case any ladies calls, I'm at home.

John. At whoam, ma'rm! Yes, I sees ye be.

[*JOHN goes out.*]

Mrs T. Well, Miss Thompson, I flatter myself this will do! It will be some surprise to your papa on his return!

Fan. It will, indeed !

Mrs T. People of fortin has a right to make a show.

Fan. Perhaps so ; but, my dear mother——

Mrs T. My dear mamma, if it arn't hinconvenient to you, Miss Thompson.

Fan. Then, dear mamma, though these curtains are very handsome, it strikes me that the colour is too glaring for July.

Mrs T. Too glaring ! what, my curtains, that cost me——let me see——and pray, Madam Airs, what could be better than scarlet silk ?

Fan. In the height of summer, perhaps white muslin would have been more seasonable.

Mrs T. White muslin ! Why, we had white muslin when your papa rented a bit of a farm of fifty acres. And now that after many years' hard toil, and his late luck in corn, he's become the rich man of the parish, arn't we to have no difference in our style ? White muslin may do for a tenant-farmer of fifty acres, but for a landowner, and a thousand a year——

Fan. You think gay colours are absolutely requisite ?

Mrs T. [*Fanning herself.*] Fanny, dear ! just set that door ajar ; the room's as suffocating as a hoven.

Fan. You are overcome, and no wonder. [*She slightly raises a window.*] That heavy turban ; that dreadful puce velvet ! Pray, change them, dear mother !

Mrs M. [*Indignantly.*] Change them ! I'm awake to you, Miss Undutiful ! You're afeard I should make your future mother-in-law jealous. I cannot abear that proud, pompous, stuck-up, poor woman. I'll not be outdone by her, though she be a doctor's wife. She looks down on us, I tell thee ; her husband looks down on us, though thou art to marry their son. Thank your papa's money for that, my dear ! Howsomever, she shan't keep me at a distance no more with her black velvets and long trains.

Fan. But, mamma, Mrs Neville does not wear black velvet on July mornings. Do forgive me !—a common print would be far more becoming.

Mrs T. Your poor papa all over ! A nat'ral bent o' mind to lowness ! Oh, if I had had your bringing up ; but boarding-schools is throwed away upon some naturs. I shouldn't wonder if, when your papa comes back, he was to repay me with black looks for all these improvements. Where gentility arn't born in the buzzum, it seldom gets there by hedication.

Fan. [*Aside.*] My poor father !

Enter FRANCIS NEVILLE.

Fra. [*Gazing around with evident wonder, but quickly suppressing it, aside.*] Some new whim of my future mother-in-law's. [*Aloud.*] Good morning, dear Mrs Thompson ! Fanny, you have not forgotten your promise to accompany me to Westgrove ?

Fan. The charge of forgetfulness applies to you, dear Francis. You are an hour behind your appointment.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] How surprised he looked at the improvements ; but he says nothing. I'm afeard envy and jealousy run through the family.

Fra. I was detained by my father. We had rather an unpleasant committee-meeting at the breakfast-table.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] Very like. I thought his creditors would call on him some fine morning, without a hinvitation.

Fan. Explain, Francis.

Fra. My father, you know, expects to be chosen mayor at the coming election. His name is next in rotation. But he appears to have displeased the burgesses by his recent attempts to enclose their common. They talk loudly, and I fear, justly, of an invasion of their rights. Though the period of contest is yet distant, enemies are on the alert, and there is reason to apprehend a strong opposition.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] I'm heartily glad to hear it. My lady Neville, your pride may get a snubbing, in spite of your black velvets and long flounces !

Fra. This circumstance has cast a little cloud over me, dear Fanny. My father is a kind man, though his jealousy of any encroachment on his dignity sometimes gives his conduct the appearance of harshness. But I will no longer talk of troubles. In your presence, dearest, it is hard to be unhappy.

Fan. Nay, I would choose you to have a little trouble, for the pleasure of sharing it.

Fra. It would be no longer trouble if you shared it.

Nat. [*Without.*] Doon, Pincher ! Doon, Rollo ! Out, ye black-nosed rascal ! Here, John ; thee maun tak' the tribe on 'em to kennel.

Fan. That's my dear father's voice.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] A day sooner would have spoiled all. Ten to one but he'd have upset the alterations.

Enter NATHAN THOMPSON.

Tho. Holloa, Bess ! Fan—— [*Stopping short in great amazement.*] By the powers, where have I got to ? There's nought wrong here. [*Touching his forehead.*] I did but tak' my pint at the half-way hoose. [*Addressing MRS THOMPSON.*] Your servant ma'rm, but I'se looking for my missis.

Mrs T. [*Rising with great stateliness, and giving her hand.*] My dear husband, don't you cognise me ?

Tho. Cognise you ! What, Bessy ! Noa it arn't—bother ! But I should know that dear old face onywhere. Ye'es ! it's my own Bess. Bless thee, old girl.

[*Throwing his arms round her.*]

Mrs T. Mr Thompson, my dear Mr Thompson, you smother me. Oh, my new dress ! you've spoiled my turbot ! Oh, my lace collar !

Tho. [*Pointing to her turban.*] I say, Bess, what hast got that pocket-handkercheer twisted about thee head for ? What, Fan, my lass ! Frank, my boy ! O you sly couple ! Kiss me, Fan ! Bless thee, thou'rt feyther's own girl. Thou'st got no lace collars to rumple. [*Shaking*

hands with FRANK.] Well, how's thee feyther, my man, and madam? Whist a bit, I can't mak' it out. Where's my chair? I would loike to sprawl my legs out. [*Sits in a rocking-chair, and nearly losing his balance, starts up in alarm.*] Why, the hoose is bewitched, sar-tain.

Mrs T. That, my dear, 's from 'Meriky.

Tho. From 'Meriky, is it? [*Sitting on the ottoman.*] What's this affair loike a tea-chest covered with satin?

Mrs T. Oh, my gracious! Get up! get up! He's a-crumpling the Hottentot!

Tho. Well, missis, this arn't the pleasantest welcome after a moonth's absence. Dang it,—[*Sitting*—]how strait-backed this chair is! It was built to teach childer to sit upright, I suppose.

Mrs T. Why, it is a lovely chair. They call it a pray-do (*prie dieu*).

Tho. A pray-doan't, I think. I can't sit in it.

Mrs T. It's the genteelest thing going.

Tho. What's the odds if it bean't comfortable?

Mrs T. Comfortable! It's fashionable.

Tho. Well, have thy way, Bess. Grander folks than uz bears with uneasy positions for the sake of the fashion. Three days' hard riding mak' a man put up wi' onything in the way o' quiet. Fanny, lass, order my poipe and a jug o' beer.

Mrs T. Beer!—pipe! I trust, Mr Thompson, you'll abscond from such vulgarity in this room.

Tho. Heyday! Hoity-toity, missis! I wish you joy of this room; but if a man can't sit in it wi'out risk of breaking his back, and mayn't drink an honest point o' ale in it, I'd reither live i' the wash-hoose.

Mrs T. In the stable with your habits, Mr Thompson.

Tho. Frank, my lad, tak' Fanny a turn or two i' the garden. [*Aside.*] This is a bad lesson for youngsters aboot to be coupled.

Fra. I most readily obey you.

Tho. Sly dog, sly dog! [*FRANK and FANNY go out.*]

Aside.] I doan't know whether it be a sin for a man to be so proud of his own flesh and blood as I am o' that lass; but she do so tak' after her feyther! [*To* MRS THOMPSON.] Come, Bessy, it's ill squabbling in the first five minutes o' meeting. Anything for peace! Give us a buss!

Mrs T. Mr Thompson! [*A loud knock at the door.*] Bless me! company! and you in that splashed coat and those dirty top-boots.

Enter JOHN.

John. Maister Florid, and Maister Sweetlip, zur!

Tho. [*Aside.*] I'm in for the bitters this morning. Here's dose the second.

Enter SWEETLIP and FLORID; JOHN *goes out.*

Flo. Good day, madam. Good day, Mr Thompson.

Sweet. Happy to find you at home, squire.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] Squire! What a gentlemanlike manner he has!

Tho. Glad to see you, gentlemen. Anything in the way o' business? Bessy, my dear!

Sweet. No business, my dear sir, that will not profit by the presence and advice of your amiable lady. Pray, ma'am, take your seat. [*Aside.*] I know she hates the Nevilles, heartily.

Tho. [*Whistles significantly; then aside.*] He wants to come the old soldier over uz, I expect.

Flo. [*Aside.*] He has a most unpolished delivery; but his uniform kindness to the poor of the borough, and the interest he has shown in all questions that affect them, have rendered him extensively popular. On the whole, he is the best man for our purpose.

Tho. Well, I wait your pleasure, friends.

Flo. As editor, sir, of the "Bumbleton Denouncer," I beg to represent that our business concerns you, not merely as a private individual; but as a member of an enlightened community, as a man, and as a patriot.

Tho. A wh—a—t—t?

Flo. The burgesses of Bumbleton appeal to you to protect their rights. To you they look as the representative of their liberties, the champion of their immunities, the vindicator of their immemorial privileges!

Tho. Doa they now?

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] What a power of fine words! I wonder what he means.

Sweet. In short, sir, the borough which has already the honour of numbering you amongst its aldermen——

Tho. Much agen my will, gentlemen!

Flo. Having invested you with that responsible dignity, invites you now to accept one of still greater magnitude—at the same time to elevate yourself, and defend the rights of your brother-freemen. She calls on you, sir—as I shall observe in the next number of the “Bumbleton Denouncer”—she calls on you to forsake, like the Roman of old, the sphere of agricultural usefulness which you adorn for that of public service? She exhorts you to achieve a glorious victory——

Tho. What, do they want me to list i’ the volunteers?

Flo. [*Both rise*; FLORID *pushes SWEETLIP back.*] No; the triumph which I advert to is a bloodless conquest; and while the wreath of the warrior is saturated with the tears of the mourner, and intertwined with the brambles of remorse, no drop shall sully—no thorn commingle with the laurels of the future Mayor of Bumbleton!

Tho. Sure-ly, sure-ly! But what’s all this in plain English?

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] Mayor of Bumbleton! My stars, my stars! Poor Nathan! How slow he be to catch it!

Sweet. To speak then, sir, in that same spirit of honest frankness which so well becomes you, the recent arbitrary attempt of Dr Neville—the alderman next in rotation to the chair—his attempt, I repeat, to encroach on the privileges of the burgesses——

Flo. [*Interrupting.*] A proceeding which speech fails me rightly to characterise; a proceeding—as I will ven-

ture to term it—of iniquitous tyranny and brazen effrontery ; a proceeding which has inspired the heart of Bumbleton with one common glow of overwhelming indignation——

Mrs T. That's right, sir ; go on ! [*Aside.*] What a nice man ! I could sit all day to hear him.

Flo. A proceeding unprecedented in the annals of the borough, and one than which none more atrocious lives in the memory of the oldest inhabitant ; a proceeding unparalleled even by that black instance of magisterial arrogance which took place when Huggins was mayor—the haughty Huggins, who, to exclude his poorer brethren from his feast, raised the price of tickets to the mayor's dinner from five shillings to seven and sixpence per head, and each man to find his own wine !

Tho. Very good ! but I tak' it we doan't want to hear about Huggins now. What's the upshot of this here ?

Sweet. The point, sir, at which your penetrating understanding would at once arrive, is this ; we represent a large number of the burgesses, who, through us, beg permission to nominate you for the office of mayor at the ensuing election.

Flo. In opposition to the imperious Neville.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] What ! my Nathan a mayor ! Gracious ! What shall I be then ?

Tho. W—h—e—w, w—h—e—w ! Come, this arn't fair. Me a mayor ! Do I look like a mayor, now ?

Flo. It is a station to which your love of independence——

Sweet. Your well-known benevolence——

Flo. Your hatred of oppression——

Sweet. Your unquestioned respectability.

Flo. Pre-eminently entitle you.

Sweet. While, if I dare make the remark, the conspicuous taste and admitted munificence of your estimable consort are additional pledges that you would maintain your elevation with the dignity it demands.

Tho. Now doan't mak' her worse than she is.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] Well, I'm puzzled to say which of these two gentlemen takes my fancy most.

Tho. Mayor! mayor! Noa, that can't be. Neebor Neville may have his faults; but it arn't for Nathan Thompson to stand up agen him.

Flo. Public duties—it is an axiom I have more than once recorded in the “Bumbleton Denouncer”—often require sacrifices of personal predilections.

Mrs T. To be sure they do. I quite hold with you, sir.

Sweet. I honour your scruples; but permit me to say that the interests of your fellow-townsmen should overcome them. May I beg you, madam, to use your all-powerful influence with his worship.

Tho. My woorship!

Sweet. Forgive the inadvertence. It seemed so natural to address you by a title that we all wish you to assume.

Tho. [*Tickled.*] My woorship! Bessy, who ever thought of seeing me a woorship? My woorship! Dang it! it doan't sound ill.

Sweet. You will comply with our request?

Flo. And confer a benefit upon Bumbleton?

Tho. Why, noa, noa, I mayn't doa an unneeborly action. It doa sound well, though. But—noa, noa.

Mrs T. My dear Mr Thompson, take time! [*Apart to him, insinuatingly.*] My dear Nathan!

Tho. Noa! Where's the good? I always loikes to out with the truth at once. I'm much obleeged, gentlemen, but——

Mrs T. He'll consider. [*Apart to him.*] You can but refuse to-morrow morning. A day makes no difference. It's civiller; I'm sure it's civiller! My dear Nathan! [*Aloud.*] He'll consider.

Tho. Well, I'll conzider. But it's no good. Well, well; thankee very kindly; I'll conzider.

Sweet. Many thanks!

Flo. The thanks of the borough; my dear madam, my dear sir, with every sentiment of respect, yours!

Sweet. Good morning, squire. Mrs Thompson, we presume to leave our cause in your hands.

Flo. Yes, because (hear, tyrants, the sublime truth),—because the bosom of beauty is the fortress of freedom!

[SWEETLIP and FLORID go out.]

Tho. My woorship! Ha, ha, ha!

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] They leave it in my hands, do they? and I guess it couldn't be in better. His worship! [*Abstractedly.*] Let me see. Male, lord; female, lady. Male, squire; female, madam!

Re-enter FRANK and FANNY.

Mrs T. [*Looking up.*] Fanny, love, hither a moment. Male, squire; female, madam! [*In an under-tone.*] Fanny, dear, what's the female of worship?

Fan. The female of worship? I fear, dear mother, grammarians have ungallantly confined the use of the word to gentlemen.

Tho. [*Aside, looking at FRANK.*] Noa: I can't do that lad's feyther an ill turn. Where hast been, my boy?

Fra. We walked, sir, on the Westgrove Road, to look at the sweetest cottage——

Fan. You know it, dear father—that with the honeysuckle porch, and the low windows from which one can step out to the grass-plot.

Tho. Honeysuckle porch and low windows. The place wants a couple o' tenants—doesn't it—to keep it tidy. Come, stroike a bargain, Fan! If you was missis there——

Fan. O father!

Tho. Would ye give an old man a corner-seat, and a poipe on the winter nights? Come——

Fan. [*Archly.*] Would we, Francis?

Fra. Ay, and a seat under the sycamore-tree in the summer evenings besides. Would we, Fanny?

Fan. [*Kissing her father.*] I think we would.

Tho. Thou'rt a good lass; thou'rt a good lad! Pshaw! get out—I'm as big a baby as ony o' ye.

Mrs T. [*With a sigh, as if awakening from reverie.*] It's hard, though, there arn't no female worship.

Enter JOHN.

John. Dr and Mrs Neville.

Enter DR and MRS NEVILLE ; JOHN goes out.

Dr N. How do, Mrs Thompson? How do, Thompson? [*Nodding to him patronisingly.*] Safe returned, I see.

Tho. [*Grasping MRS NEVILLE heartily by the hand.*] Hope you're well, madam. Han't see you for zuch a toime.

Mrs N. Thank you, my health is, as usual, delicate. [*THOMPSON and DR NEVILLE converse apart, and FANNY and FRANK do the same. Aside.*] What can that man think ladies' nerves are made of? [*Looking round in surprise.*] What have we here? Scarlet and yellow! How that vulgar person loves to expose herself! [*Aloud.*] My dear Mrs Thompson, how do you bear this oppressive weather? What a relief to get in-doors! One never feels the blessing of a cool and shady room so much as in the summer.

Mrs T. [*Aside.*] She's a-sneering. I know it by her speaking so soft and underbreath-like. Sneer away, jealousy!—sneer away, Mrs Would-be Mayor! I can stomach a good deal from her to-day. [*Aloud.*] It is, as you say, hamazing hot, Mrs Neville.

Mrs N. But you bear heat so well, my dear Mrs Thompson: you are quite fitted for a tropic climate. Now, on such a day as this, I should expire in that velvet dress which sits on you so becomingly. A charming colour; rather feverish, perhaps, for the eye to rest on, but admirably matching your chairs and drapery, my dear Mrs Thompson!

Mrs T. [*With affected carelessness.*] Yes, my dear Mrs Neville, we're much of a piece—much of a piece! [*Aside.*] Haggravate on! You'll get the worst on it.

Mrs N. It was only the other day, my milliner complained to me that all novelty in fashions had been

positively exhausted. It was for your taste, my dear Mrs Thompson, to plan the bold expedient of reversing the order of the seasons.

Mrs T. [Aside.] Haggravate on. [*As if quite overpowered.*] O this melting morning !

Mrs N. You shiver, my dear madam ! Oh, that open window ! The cold strikes you ! A sudden chill, I dare say. Shall I close—— [*Rising, as if to close the window.*

Mrs T. [Arresting her.] No, no ! don't on no account ! I know you can't stand the heat, dear Mrs Neville. [*Aside.*] O you sour, whey-faced malice, how I hate you !

Mrs N. I'm certain, now, you feel chill.

Mrs T. [Much incensed.] No I don't, Mrs Neville—I don't, ma'rm—and what's more, you know I don't.

Mrs N. You surely are not suffering from heat ?

Mrs T. Yes I am, then—Mrs Worship ! Ha, ha, ha ! I've as much right to be hot in summer-time as you have.

Mrs N. [Aside.] She's stung ; purse-proud vulgarity ! [*Aloud.*] And more cause, considering your costume. But leaders of fashion, ma'am, must put up with these trifling inconveniences. To carry out the experiment completely, you should walk to church in white muslin in December.

Mrs T. Whatever I wears is paid for, Mrs Neville ; and let me tell you, ma'rm, if any one in Bumbleton has a right to set the fashions, it's the mayor's wife that is to be.

Dr N. [Who comes forward with THOMPSON.] Mayor's wife ! The very subject, dear Penelope, on which honest Thompson has been speaking to me. Those impertinent intermeddlers Sweetlip and Florid have been with him. Would you believe that they have attempted to persuade our excellent, well-meaning friend here to oppose my election to the mayoralty ?

Mrs N. [Aside.] Oh, this explains her interest in the mayor's wife that is to be. How richly absurd ! [*Aloud.*] I am by no means surprised at those presuming and designing people ; but I am sure they cannot influence a man of Mr Thompson's sound common sense. He will

never suffer himself to be made ridiculous for their amusement.

Mrs T. [Aside.] I never heard such impudence !
[*Aloud.*] No, ma'rm ; when the state of the poll shows us in the hundreds and you in the tens, it arn't Thompson that will be ridiculous.

Dr N. My estimable friend, your lady cannot be serious in these observations ?

Mrs T. Oh no ! Not serous—by no manner of means ; no, not at all serous.

Tho. [Laughing.] Dang it ! she's up now.

Dr N. Farmer, I must insist on an explanation. Do you at once renounce all pretensions to the office of Mayor of Bumbleton ?

Tho. [Chuckling.] Whoy, whoy !

Dr N. I insist upon an explanation.

Tho. Noa ; doan't 'ee now ; doan't insist. I'm one of them cattle that never goes well with driving.

Dr N. I will thank you to speak plainly. I am little acquainted with the comparisons of ploughmen.

Tho. Noa, thou arn't. 'Twould doa thee good to know a little o' a ploughman's life. I tell thee, Doctor, whistling to the team afore breakfast is better physic than all thy julap.

Dr N. This I cannot put up with.

Mrs N. Mr Francis Neville, oblige me by wishing that amiable young person a good morning.

Dr N. I am sorry for you, Francis ; but you must part at once, and for ever.

Tho. What, coom, man ! coom, madam ! Whoy need our squabbles consarn the young uns ? Whoy, ma'rm, I didn't think ye'd such a hard heart.

Dr N. [Excitedly.] Do you renounce your pretensions to the mayoralty ?

Tho. Softly ! whither, whoa ?

Mrs N. My dear, if Mr Thompson chooses to fancy himself in the field, it's quite unnecessary for us to humour the delusion. Mr Francis——

Fra. But, my dear madam.

Mrs T. Miss Fanny Thompson, if you respects your mamma, you'll drop that young man's acquaintance.

Dr N. That young man, ma'am? My son a young man? Francis! take up your hat; or I'll cut you off with a shilling.

Mrs T. If folks says true, that's likely to be the tottle of his fortune, whether or no.

Dr N. Francis!

Tho. Frank, obey thee feyther! It's best, my lad. There, shak' hands, and hope for better days. Coom, Fanny.

[*Separating them.* MRS NEVILLE, *through her glass,* surveys MRS THOMPSON *contemptuously.*

Mrs T. Well, ma'rm, you needn't look at me through that copper-gilt gincrack. I'se plain enough to see, I warrant.

Mrs N. Oh, decidedly plain enough. [*Aside.*] The report is she's been a cook, and her manners confirm it. I'll improve that hint.

Mrs T. Ma'rm, I despise your hincitations. Yes, ma'rm, treats them with contempt—I do. They don't make me angry, ma'rm.

Dr N. As a medical man, I can excuse you, Mrs Thompson. The heat of your dress accounts for that of your temper.

Mrs N. Nay, doctor; if rumour's correct, the lady's early occupations must have habituated her to bear a tolerable degree of heat. [*Aside.*] I wonder whether that's broad enough.

Mrs T. Well, ma'rm; what of my early hoccupations? I don't take you.

Tho. But I dea, Bess; she means that thou was Lord Netherby's cook. Well, where's the shame o' that?

Mrs T. Whist! hold your tongue, Nathan! hold your tongue! Whatever I was, ma'rm, nobody has nothing to say agen my character. I pays my bills; I brings up my children creditably; and does my duties as a wife. It

arn't my way to make a grand show, and see fine company twice a year, and live on scraps for a month after. I never starves the kitchen to fatten the parlour ; I knows how to keep a good servant's table !

Mrs N. Very likely, considering how many years you sat at one.

Mrs T. Did I, ma'rm—did I ? very well—very like—yes—no doubt ! Ha, ha, ha ! [*Bursting into tears.*] I won't abear it ! I won't abear it ! Nathan, Nathan ! will you see me put on i' this way ?

Tho. [*Much exasperated.*] Noa, dang it ! I woan't, missis—I woan't. [*To MRS NEVILLE.*] I tell you what, ma'am, it arn't easy for a female to put my blood up ; but you're too much for a man's patience. I wasn't taught manners when I was a young 'un, and maybe you was. But there's summut here tells me that thof she's larned how to jingle a piano, and talk all the outlandish lingoes in Christendom, the woman who insults another because she's been in hoomble carcumstances is a voolgar woman ! I tell you, ma'rm, a bad heart's the root o' bad breeding ; and all bad breeding's o' that growth ; stomach it as you like. And, look to it, neebor, I'll stand for the woorship—I will. I says it, and what I says I sticks to.

Mrs N. Doctor, doctor ! this person's quite unendurable. Francis ! I shall faint.

Tho. The open air, ma'rm, is good for weak nerves.

[*DR and MRS NEVILLE go out, regarding THOMPSON and his wife contemptuously.*]

Tho. Frank, my boy, I'm sorry for thee. But go now, man ; doan't 'ee speak—doan't 'ee speak. [*He shakes hands with him, and FRANK retires.*] Coom hither, Fan !—never mind, Bess ! I'll stand for the woorship ! Dang it ! I'll stand for the woorship.

[*FANNY sinks into a chair. MRS THOMPSON laughs excitedly, and as THOMPSON puts on his hat and is going out, rings the bell.*]

An interval of more than two months is supposed to have elapsed between the 1st and 2d Acts.

ACT II., SCENE I.

A garden at the back of NATHAN THOMPSON'S house.

FRANCIS and FANNY discovered.

Fan. No, Frank; I have already done wrong in granting you this interview. Repay my father's tender affection by violating his commands—by deserting his age?

Fra. We will not desert him. When he knows that for your sake I would risk the favour of parents whose harshness and injustice alone prevent our union—ah, then, believe me, your father will relent. And I will not eat the bread of idleness! I am young; my frame is well knit and vigorous, my conscience light, my heart hopeful. The farmer shall instruct me in his honourable occupations. I can ride, drive, if need be—learn how to guide the harrow, or wield the flail myself; pay the wages, receive the debts, post the balance, and make myself an absolute treasure of a factotum.

Fan. No, Francis, you must not prove your truth as a lover by your forgetfulness as a son. Your parents may despise me, but they shall have no cause to complain of me.

Fra. Despise you, Fanny! [*Distant bells are heard.*] That lively peal is sadly out of tune with the tones of one's heart.

Fan. It's for the coming election. The choice of mayor, they say, must fall upon my father. We shall have many guests here to-night; and they expect me to be gay—to—to—ah, Frank!

Fra. Don't smile in that way, Fanny. When I see what an effect our trials have on your spirits, on your health, I could almost wish you had never loved me. If I could but bear it all myself! Such a Christmas as we were looking forward to!

Fan. Hush ! I think the door opens. [FRANK *goes out.*] Farewell, dear—dear Frank. I shall hear of you—of your goodness I am sure—of your happiness I hope. [*She goes out.*] And that will make me—not more happy, but less wretched.

Enter MRS THOMPSON, *still gaudily attired, on opposite side.*

Mrs T. [*Aside, observing FANNY.*] How pale and thin she do look ! No physic, no change, no amusement seems to do her any good. To-day, too, when I hoped we should all be so full o' life. How thin she do get ! Dr Nostrum says there's something on her mind. It can't be that Frank Neville ; she never mentions his name. Poor lad ! it warn't his fault though, that he come of such a queer stock. [*Approaching FANNY.*] Fanny, love, I don't like to see thee moping in this way—least of all to-day, when thy father's on the point of being made first man of the town. Come, lassie, what makes thee take on so ? I tell thee, but keep it close—thy papa means it as a surprise—there's such a love of a white satin come home for thee, and a real white corny-lion brooch, and such ear-rings ! and some o' the first country people's coming to the ball to-night, to show their respect for Squire Thompson. They all call him Squire now ; he's sure to be chose. Nay ; but it's a duty like to be happy !

Fan. And do these things make *you* happier, dear mother ?

Mrs T. Why, yes—yes. They come a little too gradual though. One gets used to 'em afore one has 'em, by expecting 'em so long. I should have liked now to have gone to bed a plain Missis ; and to have waked a Mrs Mayor without looking for anything of the kind ; but now, ye see, it don't take one by surprise. The gloss gets off on it ; besides, I can't be happy till I see the roses back in thy cheeks, Fanny. But, thou must dance to-night.

Fan. Dear mother, if you would but excuse me to—
VOL. II. U

night ; I am not well, indeed I am not ; and as for dancing, it is a hard thing for the feet to be light when the heart is heavy.

Mrs T. You give way to it ; you give way to it ! you shouldn't ! you look pale and ill on purpose to vex me ! it aren't dutiful, Fanny !

Fan. Indeed, for your sake, I would be happier if I could.

Mrs T. What does ail thee, Fanny ? thou should trust thy mother. She loves thee—she deserves well of thee—though she says it herself.

Fan. Well then, I will conceal nothing. I have obeyed you, you and my father—have I not—without a murmur ? It was not a small thing, month after month, with your consent, to listen to Frank Neville's vows of affection—to plan out a future life of love and happiness—to find the words of kindness that were at first the ear's luxuries, grow in time to be the heart's necessities—its daily food—its very sustenance ; then to be told that I must hear them no more—that I must lose for ever that dream of joy which comes but once in a lifetime ! But I bore it, I will bear it, I will be your loving, dutiful child as ever. But oh, do not ask me to share in a triumph and a joy that recall to me the sorrow and the defeat of his parents—the pain of him whom I so loved—whom I still so love ! It would break my heart !

Mrs T. [*In great emotion.*] Don't say so ; don't take on i' that way ; nobody could help it, Fanny ; nobody could tell he'd got such a hold on thee. If I could have known—*[Aside.]* And the doctor says she don't mend. *[Aloud.]* But it wasn't my doing ; was it now ?

Fan. Oh, no, no ! Could you think that I meant to reproach you. *[Embracing her.]* Bless you, dear mother ! you will excuse me to-night. Thanks, thanks ; I will go to my chamber for half an hour. You shall find me quite altered when I return. *[Aside.]* For my father's sake I will try to look happy ; I would not overcast his pleasure to-day.

[She goes out.]

Mrs T. Ah ! but it is my fault though ; I made no account of her in this quarrel. I ought to have thought how I should have felt, if twenty years ago Nathan's father had made him break off his visits. How the echoes of his horse's hoofs used to come dancing like on my heart. Daisy me ! I remember now that Sunday he didn't come. How the wind seemed to come rattling the shutters, and singing out, " No ! he aren't coming." And when I looked in the garden near dusk, the trees waved about as though they was quite glad I was so miserable. Everything seemed gloomy. The fire went black as if it thought, " Where's the use o' burning ? he aren't coming ! " And I to have had no thought for this poor lass ! It's too late now. Nathan will be chose in two hours more, and the Nevilles will never forgive his being mayor. My poor dear Fanny, how she do pine ! Oh, if Nathan would but give up. But he's red-hot agen the doctor and his wife. It's no use. [*Shouts "Thompson for ever."*] Here he comes !

Enter NATHAN THOMPSON, attired in his best, with a large nosegay, and a blue ribband inserted in his coat.

Tho. Well, Mrs Thompson, my dear ! I hope wine and luncheon's all laid i' the parlour. Sweetlip, Florid, and fifty more are coming here to form procession. We're a-going to the Toon Hall in state, I can aszure ye.

Mrs T. You're quite certain o' winning the day, Nathan ?

Tho. Tak' care nobody overhears thee call me Nathan ! Things is altered with us, Mrs Thompson, my dear. Oh, sartain o' winning. Our voters will half fill the hall ; and Neville might undertake to drive all his to the poll at once, in his own four-wheel.

Mrs T. Mr Thompson, my love, have you set your heart very much on being a worship ?

Tho. To be sure I have, Mrs Thompson ! han't you ?—And it aren't, moind you, that I care so much for the honour ; but I vowed to that stiff-pokered Neville that I would

give his pride a taking down ; and I will. I tell thee he's stirred up that much bile in my constitution, that all his physic can't do away with. I'll teach him and that spiteful lump o' pride, his wife, to insult thee. I wouldn't for a clear thoosand lose this election. But why do'st thee sigh so ? Where's Fanny ? Neither o' ye seem to care a whistle about the great consarn o' the day. However, it don't much matter. The Mayor o' Bumbleton will be too busy wi' other folks' affairs, to care much what goes on by his own fireside.

Mrs T. Oh, Nathan ! don't talk in that cruel manner.

Tho. Nathan agen, Mrs T.—But I can't stop idling at this rate. Moind, my love, that the wine and refreshments be all properly laid out i' the parlour. I must go. The independent electors of Bumbleton is waiting for me to treat 'em to summut to drink. [THOMPSON goes out.]

Mrs T. He be quite altered ; out night after night, with that Sweetlip and Florid ! no comfortable bit o' chat over supper as we used to have—and poor Fanny ! But I put him on to this mayorship—I did ; and it don't seem easy to get him off it now. For Fanny's sake I will make one last trial. But I know it will come to nothing. Here—John, Dolly, Tim, my lad—I'll see about it at once !

[*She goes out.*]

Enter FLORID, bowing to MRS THOMPSON.

Flo. Not in the house ! not here ! this looks suspicious ; very much like the early symptoms of a grievance. A candidate should be more accessible to his future constitutents. If he be careless before his election, he may be tyrannical after it. But we'll not anticipate. There is a patriotic indignation slumbering in the hearts of the Bumbletonians, that would hurl the despot from his throne ! Not a bad sentiment for my next leading article. However, we'll hope for the best. I'll use this opportunity to refresh my memory on the speech I have

to deliver at to-day's nomination. [*He draws a manuscript from his pocket.*] I flatter myself I shall cut a tolerable figure in to-morrow's "Denouncer." Half of the speech is in type already. Yes, here we are. [*He reads.*

"Our eloquent and distinguished townsman, Horatio Florid, Esq., next rose, and was received with volleys of thrilling and electrifying applause. We understood him, (though the tumultuous cheers rendered his commencement almost inaudible), to speak as follows :—

"Brother Burgesses! This is a critical day in the annals of Bumbleton. The genius of independence is not dead in our borough; she did but slumber." I'll put in a "hear, hear," there. "She did but slumber. Drugged with the moral opiates which traitors insidiously administered—she sank into a torpor which they mistook for her decease. [*Loud cheering.*] But the lethargy though deep, was not enduring. When her enemies were about in triumph to toll the knell for her annihilation, she began to move uneasily in her sleep! Her friends observed with rapture the spasmodic palpitations of vitality in her heaving bosom! After a pause, she twitched the muscles of her face as one who groans under the pressure of the nightmare! Next, did she pass her hand athwart her brow, and rub her gradually unclosing eyes! Then sitting on an end, she surveyed with calm and intrepid glance the field of combat! She awoke to a sense of the machinations she had encountered! She sprang from the dust! she stood erect! the flush mantled in her cheek! the fire kindled in her eye! and with the blast of a trumpet, she called upon Bumbleton to rally round Thompson and her privileges. [*Deafening shouts.*] Yes! [*Walking about in excitement.*] I shall not beat that in a hurry! With the blast of a trumpet she called upon Bumbleton"—

[*He goes out speaking.*

SCENE II.

Apartment in NATHAN THOMPSON'S house, as in Act I.

JOHN, DOLLY, and TIM, a servant lad.

[*They finish covering carpet with green baize.*]

John. Yes ; I tell thee, Dolly, 'twas missis's express orders. "John," says she, "take care to put a goodish piece o' green baize over the carpet, hespecially near the fire-place." Tim, my lad, look aloive and help Dolly up with the old stond, and maister's old arm-chair wi' the cushions.

[*DOLLY and TIM go out.*]

John. [*Pushing the ottoman into a corner, and covering it.*] This thing-ambob's to be pushed into a corner, and covered with a cloth. Then these foine, gentry chairs is to be dismissed sarvice, and the old farmer-looking solid-legs is to come back i' their places. Well, I does what my betters tell me ; but if ma missis aren't cracked on the harticle of furniture—

Re-enter DOLLY and TIM with stand, cushioned arm-chair, and other chairs, followed by MRS THOMPSON, wearing a very quiet cap and apron ; her whole dress much subdued.

Mrs T. That'll do for the present, John ! Dolly, bring up a jug of ale, and your master's pipe. [*Servants go out ; MRS THOMPSON sits dejectedly.*] Yes ! his natur's clean changed—he be quite another man ; it's no odds to him now what goes on by his own fireside. They was his own words. Men that has wives and childer, has no right to be mayors.

Enter DOLLY with pipe and jug.

That'll do, Dolly !

[*DOLLY goes out.*]

Enter NATHAN THOMPSON.

Tho. Well, Mrs Thompson! Holloa! what's covered up all the grand furniture for? What's got the new-fashioned chairs? D'ye think the chief magistrate o' the borough, as is to be, is a-going to deposit his person in one of them common bits o' wood-work ordinar' people sits in? And what's up wi' yourself? Where's your grand lace cap? Why must you put on an apron to hide that dress that cost me such a sight? I suppose, madam, when I'm chose, you'll compliment me by wearing a black boombazean deeply trimmed wi' crape floonces!

Mrs T. My dear Mr T.—my dear husband—Nathan—yes, I must call thee Nathan; I always called thee so, when thou used to come a-courting me in Lord Netherby's kitchen.

Tho. Whist, whist, mar'm! Times is changed! Thou maun forget Lord Netherby's kitchen, coming a-courting and such loike.

Mrs T. Forget your coming a-courting?

Tho. Ay, sure-ly. A woorship aren't ever supposed to have been guilty o' them common sort of weaknesses.

Mrs T. Weaknesses! O Nathan, give up this wicked mayorship, and be the man ye was!

Tho. Wh—a—a—t?

Mrs T. [*Rushing up to him.*] O luv! look at the old arm-chair, the cooshion, the jug o' beer, the pipe, my luv—oh, give up the mayorship, Nathan! Let our comfortable nights come back again! I'll never worrit thee more wi' my foolish finery—*never*, Nathan!

Tho. Doan't talk to me of jugs o' beer, and poipes! What would the gentry o' the toon think, to find the mayor drinking out on a tankard, and smoaking 'baccy?

Mrs T. It's a judgment! I deserved it. But, O husband, consider our poor Fanny—her heart's a breaking for all her quietness.

Tho. [*With emotion.*] Wh—a—a—t, my Fanny? [*Con-*

trolling himself.] Nonsense, Mrs T. What in the world has the lass to fret her?

Mrs T. Don't ye see she's pining away for Frank Neville? Where's her colour gone too?

Tho. How doa I know? It aren't genteel to have a pair o' cheeks as red as brick-dust. A mayor's daughter doesn't ought to have much colour.

Mrs T. Very well, very well! You hard-hearted—oh, I couldn't have believed it! [*Aside.*] I'll send Fanny to him; it's the last chance. [*She goes out.*]

Tho. Coom; I'm reyther too hard wi' her. She's pretty well cured o' turning me out into the wash-house to smoake! But I can't give up the mayorship to please her. I vowed to tak' that man's pride down a peg or two. Neither him nor his missis shall insoolt my Bessy for nowt. But, poor Fanny! Well, dang it! if Frank wants to marry her, his feyther maun knock under. I'm sorry for 'em; but what I says, I sticks to! Pshaw, it'll blow oover! It aren't every man as can lay five thoosand poond doon with his daughter! Coom, thof I am mayor, old Neville will eat humble pie for five thoosand poond portion.

Enter FANNY.

Tho. [*Aside.*] Here comes the little puss. But, bless me! Bessy was right. She doa look a good stone lighter. [*Aloud.*] Fan, my lass—Fan, my pet—what makes thee look so dismal?

Fan. [*Aside.*] For his sake I must hide it.

Tho. Coom hither, my jewel! Sit doon; give us thee hond. Thou aren't unhappy? Nowt vexes thee?

Fan. I, I—what should vex me, dear father? I am sure—that is—why do you think—

Tho. [*Patting her under the chin.*] O, ay, that's right! I knawed she didn't ail much. Look! here's a bunch of true blue I had made up for thee myself. Thou maun wear my colours to-day, Fan! They woan't hurt thee!—clinch 'em boldly—they won't burn.

Fan. No, dear sir—but—

Tho. "Zur!" [*Rises.*] O, well, if thou'rt ashamed on me! I knaw I gived thee a good bringing up; but I didn't look for thee ever to be so fine-ladyish as to despise the old man. But follow your own gait, Miss Thompson.

Fan. Oh, no; I will wear them. I will, indeed, but—
[*Dropping the ribbons and bursting into tears*—father, could you be so angry if you knew all?

Tho. She tak's on more than I thought for. [*Aside.*] Foolish wench! I gave my word I would be mayor, and what I says I sticks to. [*Aloud.*] Nonsense, Fanny! These Nevilles will come roond. Howsomever, if they're more to thee than thee own feyther—

Fan. O father! love is not like so much gold, which you can put to-day into the bank and take out to-morrow, in case of danger. No, the more danger, the harder it is to withdraw affection. We must leave it where we first gave it—ay, though we should be beggared for ever! Forgive me, forgive me! [*Throwing herself on his neck.*

Tho. What? thou tak's on thee to set me doon, does thee? Thou'lt read me a lecture, will thee? I say I woan't have it! Noa! Thou'lt abuse my kindness, thou undutiful, ungrateful, pervarse, wilful, silly—darling, darling Fan! [*Embracing her.*] What a simpleton thou makes me. But doan't think thou'lt get the better on me—noa, noa! [*Aside.*] I believe she doa love me though.

Enter JOHN, FLORID, and SWEETLIP.

Flo. High time for the sons of liberty to be in action, sir. The faction is in arms. Already Neville's procession insults the blushing brow of daylight!

Swe. The candidate himself; five couples arm in arm; a drum; two fifes; a fiddle; and three little boys in the rear.

Tho. [*After a short pause.*] I say, Florid!

Flo. Sir!

Tho. The man can never go to the poll i' that way. We maun't let him mak' such a fool on himself.

Flo. I'm afraid his natural tendency in that direction is too strong to be counteracted.

Tho. John !

Enter JOHN.

Stop Dr Neville's procession wi' ma respectful compliments, and I maun see him at once on most particular business. [JOHN goes out.]

Sweet. My dear sir !

Tho. I say we maun't let him play the fool. We maun bring him to terms.

Fan. [*Aside.*] What ! will my father parade his triumph before the very eyes of his opponent ?

Flo. My dear sir, this is very injudicious ! But he will never come. [*Aside.*] I know something will happen to spoil my speech.

Tho. Trust him for coming ; I knaw him better than you doa. Well, Fanny, where art going ? [*Aside.*] I'll give her a lesson she woan't soon forget. [*Apart to her.*] What ! I thought thou never disobeyed me.

[FANNY *dejectedly resumes her seat.*]

Enter JOHN.

John. Here be the doctor, zur !

Tho. Here, John ! [*Whispers to him.*]

John. [*With a grin.*] Yees, zur, sartanily. [*He goes out.*]

Enter DR NEVILLE.

Dr N. [*To THOMPSON.*] I attend you, sir, to enquire the meaning of a summons, which, under the circumstances, strikes me as extraordinary.

Tho. Well, neebor, the meaning on it is, that I am more a friend to thee than thou art to thyself. Thou better keep at whoam to-day ; there's noa chance for thee. Thou'lt spend thee money, get laughed at, and—now I doan't mean to offend thee.

Dr N. Mr Thompson ! whether a gentleman could make such a proposition as yours, I will not stay to argue ;

but that a gentleman cannot entertain such a proposition, I am morally certain. The event of this contest, sir, may ensure you a momentary triumph, but should my supporters be less numerous than your own, I shall yet be proud of their character and position. And when I seek my pillow this night, it will be with the happy conviction, that I have fulfilled my duty to the respectable and intelligent inhabitants of the borough.

Flo. [*Who has been much excited by the DOCTOR'S remarks—apart to SWEETLIP.*] I declare he might edit an opposition to the "Bumbleton Denouncer!" I should like to try a fall with him once-a-week. He's a creditable man. I never believed him capable of such impressive delivery. [*Aloud to NEVILLE.*] Sir, I understand that sneer. Respectability and intelligence! when was Faction without a watch-word? Was it intelligent, I ask—was it respectable to encroach on the immemorial rights of the poorer burgesses—to——

Dr N. You are, I suppose, the person who, in the "Bumbleton Denouncer," allots three columns to the reports of his own speeches, and three lines to those of his colleagues in the Corporation. I can hope little from your impartiality; but know, sir, that I have already confessed myself to have been wrong in the matter of enclosing the common, and that there is no man who more sympathises with the rights of his fellow-burgesses, or will do more to uphold them, than John Neville.

Flo. [*Aside.*] A trick to catch votes—a clever man!

Dr N. [*With great dignity.*] And now gentlemen, good morning.

Fan. [*Aside.*] My last hope goes with him.

Tho. [*Perplexed, after glancing at FANNY.*] Eh! what? Stop, Doctor! Thou'lt be the friend o' the poor; do'st mean it?

Dr N. I am in the habit of receiving credit for my assertions.

Tho. [*Aside.*] How the tears be streaming through Fanny's fingers—thou'lt be—noa; I caw'nt—he insoltsed

my woife ; thought nowt in his scorn o' breaking my daughter's heart. I caw'nt knuckle under to him, and look chicken-hearted afore these—[*Aloud to NEVILLE*—hem ! —that's all—good day ! [FANNY *who has approached him with trembling steps, now hangs on his arm.*] Who's this ?—my bairn—stay, Doctor—[FLORID and SWEETLIP *go up*—Thou'lt not tak' from the poor—their bit of—of—borough common—thou'rt sorry for—thee faults. [*Aside.*] It's harder than I thought for. [*Aloud.*] Hither, neebor. [*Snatching a red favour from NEVILLE.*] Fan ! thou'rt dearer than pride to a feyther's heart. Put that i' thy belt, Royal red—and—Neville for ever ! Ha, ha, ha ! [*As FANNY embraces him.*] This pays me ! this pays me !

<i>Flo.</i>	}	But, sir, you're tampering——	[<i>Simultaneously.</i>]
<i>and</i>			
<i>Sweet.</i>			

Can I credit——

Tho. [*To NEVILLE.*] She needn't wear thy colours in her girdle, when they coom so nat'ral to her cheeks.

Flo. [*Indignantly.*] Mr Thompson !

Tho. He'll be the friend o' the Borough, rich and poor aloike. I could be no more myself. We maun carry his election.

Dr N. Farmer, are you serious ? carry my election ?

Flo. Impossible ! surprise and indignation alike——
[*Aside.*] What, lose my speech ?

Tho. The man's changed. Noa doot thy speeches has done much to enlighten his moind.

Flo. Eh ? no ! utterly impossible !

Tho. Whist ! The electors will tak' my backing agen thine ! Thou'lt be in the mi-nority. The "Bumbleton Denouncer" will lose credit—perhaps carculation !

Flo. [*Aside.*] A thorough man of business. [*Aloud.*] Sir, it—it cannot be.

Tho. [*Significantly.*] Thou was asking me, t'other day, the rent o' that sweet little villa just out o' the toon. It would let low to an obleeing tenant.

Flo. What—stay ! [*Aside.*] A thought strikes me. By writing an introductory paragraph on the accession of

Neville to the popular cause, and substituting his name for Thompson's throughout, my speech might stand very well yet. [*Aloud.*] I think it may be done, sir! Sweet-lip! Measures, not Men! Principles, not Persons!—eh?

Sweet. [*Aside.*] I stand or fall with him. We both fail disunited. [*Aloud.*] My dear Florid, I enter fully into the spirit of that elevated sentiment.

Tho. Coom, Doctor, thou'st had a tidy breeze, but thou'll mak' port, I fancy.

Dr N. Why since, my dear friend, you have so kindly taken the helm——

Enter MRS THOMPSON and MRS NEVILLE, at opposite sides.

Mrs N. Doctor Neville, I could not believe the report that you had thus degraded yourself!

Tho. Perhaps you woan't believe that he'll be mayor in a couple of hours.

Mrs N. What am I to understand?

Dr N. My dear!

[*DR and MRS NEVILLE converse apart.*

Mrs T. O, Nathan! bless thee for those words, for that look. [*Putting her arms round him.*

Tho. Whist, luv—doesn't thee see there's company present?

Mrs N. [*Aside.*] How very fortunate! I was wondering where we could borrow the money to meet these extra expenses. [*Aloud.*] Well, really, Mr Thompson, I must say this is very becoming and handsome conduct on your part. Mrs Thompson, I cannot deny that I owe you some apologies; will you accept them?

[*Offering her hand.*

Mrs T. [*With some hesitation, giving hers.*] Why, ma'm, Mrs Thompson don't quite like it; but Fanny's mother can't help it.

Mrs N. Come, we must forget the past.

Tho. Noa! doa'nt forget it; larn from it—[*Significantly.*] larn from it, madam.

[*MRS NEVILLE advances to SWEETLIP and FLORID and inspects their blue favours inquiringly, through her glass. They conceal them with their hats.*

Enter JOHN with FRANK NEVILLE.

John. Here be young maister, zur! I hadn't far to zeek him; he's been a-haunting the back of the garden these last three weeks.

Tho. Fie, Frank! I'll set Pincher on thee, mon, if I catch thee skulking aboot the grounds. Here's a neat little lass that will always run to the door to welcome thee. [*Placing FANNY'S hand in FRANK'S.*

Fan. Dear, dear, father!

Tho. [*Kissing her.*] Excuse me, gentlemen.

Flo. [*As if absorbed.*] "With the blast of a trumpet, she calls upon Bumbleton to rally round Thom—T—T—T—Neville, and her privileges."

Tho. Well, Fan! "Now you mak me speak; luvre aren't loike so much gold that you can put into a bank, and draw oot in case——"

Fan. [*Interrupting.*] O father!

Tho. Well, trust all thy fortin there. [*Pointing to FRANK.*] I give my free consent—I doan't fancy that bank will break. [*Cheering without.*] They're waiting for us, Doctor! I doan't grudge thee the woorship, mon! There's a little still quiet voice in every mon's heart; and if it speaks in his favour, it does him more good than three rounds of applause at the polling place! but I doan't despise the good opinion o' my friends neyther. [*To the audience.*] Neebors, though I've resigned at Bumbleton, I'm still a candidate for your votes. And if ye doa but give 'em heartily, I shall be the happiest feyther, and proodest mon in the whole parish!

END OF BOROUGH POLITICS.

DRAMATIC SCENES AND
FRAGMENTS.

DRAMATIC SCENES AND FRAGMENTS.

MONTEZUMA, *who has been induced by the treachery of the Mexican High Priest to believe that the Spaniards are the heralds of the benignant God Quetzalcoatl, has surrendered himself to the custody of CORTES and his associates. The following scene takes place in the Spanish quarters, from which Montezuma hears the shrieks of the Mexicans as they are murdered in the Temple by the Spaniards under ALVARADO. CORTES, who has been absent from the city, returns during the scene.*

Mon. Teçalco, wife ! my eyes
Thirst for thy sight. 'Twas said within a week
We should rejoin ; yet thrice the budding moon
Has ripened to full blossom in the heavens,
And still she comes not. Is this sorrow meant
To prove me more ? So says the holy priest,
And that by my submission won, great Cortes
Seeks Quetzalcoatl's ¹ home beyond the seas
And bids him hasten. Come, propitious God,
Bless Mexico at last ! [*Cries are heard from the Temple.*
A cry !—the God
Already walks our streets. [*Renewed cries.*] No, 'tis
Despair,

¹ A Mexican deity, at whose advent Mexico was to realise unprecedented renown and prosperity.

Not Joy that shouts so shrill. Yon shafts of sound
Are barbed with pangs.

[The cries of Mexicans are renewed and grow wilder, mingled with shouts of Spaniards.]

They pierce my heart, which streams
With more than blood ; ho ! there !

[He rushes towards the door ; two Spanish SENTINELS enter.]

What mean those cries ?

1st Sen. I know not. *[Cries renewed.]*

Mon. *[Seizing him.]* Slave, thou palterest ! Speak, or
never

Speak more ! *[Cries grow fainter.]*

2d Sen. My lord !

Mon. *[Releasing SENTINEL.]* It dies away
And the loud horror ebbs into a groan.

2d Sen. *[Who has gone to door.]* The Priest Xenitzin
and a woman skilled

In drugs attend your Highness.

Mon. Bring them hither.

Enter XENITZIN, and TEÇALCO, disguised as a woman of the humbler class. At a sign from MONTEZUMA, SENTINELS go out.

Now, Priest ! those cries ?

Xen. Came from the temple, sir ; but yonder matron
Best knows the dismal tale.

Mon. Bid her approach.

Xen. *[Aside.]* Her voice will wake a storm. I'd have
it so,

A crisis proves the worth of men like me.

[To TEÇALCO.] Lady, you may approach.

[He quits the apartment ; TEÇALCO advances to MONTEZUMA and throws back the coarse robe in which she has disguised herself.]

Mon. *[Seizing her hands.]* Teçalco !

Te.

Ay ;

How fares my lord ?

Mon. Those cries ? my people ?

Te. Sit

If thou wouldst hear the tale, and bid me sit
Lest my brain reel.

[She conducts him to a seat of cushions, and sits on a cushion at his feet.]

Mon. Now, now?—

Te. You know this day

A high day—our set yearly festival
In honour of the War-God. Mexico
Sent to his shrine her bravest and her best ;
Hoar chiefs that like Time's landmarks skirt a sea
Of mirroring glory,—sons who feel their names
A heritage,—mothers who sweep the locks
From their boys' brows as from a page where Fame
Has sworn to write,—mothers,—I say !—bright boys,
And prattling sisters—Gods !

Mon. Go on !

Te. They poured

Into the Temple Court. An Empire's wealth
Flashed from their jewelled collars and pearled plumes
In the blue day ! An Empire's wealth were poor
To ransom life back to one silent heart
Of all that host.

Mon. What sayst thou ?

Te. They were slaughtered ;

Unwarned, unarmed ! Even as the music rose,
The Spaniards burst on them. Their coward knives
Lacked room for their fell use till from the mass
Two living banks were hewn adown which rushed
A torrent—blood !

Mon. Ah !

Te. Murder like the plague

Slew with a breath ;
Lads who had watched their sires, so choked their sobs,
Were wrenched from love's fond gripe. Then parent
hearts—
Dumb for themselves—rang to the faithless Gods,

Shrieks that were prayers, mixed, multitudinous !
 Didst catch the child's small cry, a rill of sound
 Amidst the deafening cataract ? All is still ;
 They lie with upturned faces to the Heavens,
 And stiffly wait for vengeance !

Mon. [*In a whisper and rising.*] They shall have it.

Te. Who dares say that when Montezuma clasps
 Hands with the assassins, when all Mexico — [*Pauses.*

Mon. Holds him a recreant.

Te. No, not *all* !

Mon. [*Embracing her.*] Wife, wife !

Te. A watch was set on me as on our daughter
 And Guatemozin.¹

Mon. They are safe ?

Te. Yes, barred
 Within their doors. In this disguise I gained
 The temple. Wearing neither gold nor gems,
 I 'scaped the plundering band of Alvarado.

Mon. Of Alvarado ?

Te. Aye.

Mon. Cortes shall blight him
 With his own lightnings.

Te. Cortes !—Why these murderers
 Hurl'd Quetzalcoatl's statue from its shrine
 But yesterday, and, as the shattered form
 Bestrewed the ground, cried—'*Tis the will of Cortes !*

Mon. No, no — thou stabb'st me !—no, not *Cortes*
 false,—
 Not false to Quetzalcoatl !

Te. Thou shalt prove it !
 He is returned on sudden.

Mon. [*After a pause.*] None shall 'scape
 Till I have strict account. This ring, Teçalco,
 To Guatemozin ! [*Gives ring.*] If he be not free,
 To Watoatoli ! Let the people rise
 In arms and meet me ! Bid our chiefs break down

¹ Son-in-law to Montezuma.

All bridges to the mainland ; then set fire
To Cortes' ships ! The city's a tribunal,
And I—the judge !

Te.

I go, dear lord !

Mon.

Speed, speed !

[TEÇALCO goes out, resuming her disguise.

I'll know the worst !—Voices !—'Tis Cortes comes
And the fiend Alvarado !—The High Priest too,
As if in council with them ! Ah, unseen,
I'll prove the chief, and if that face he wears
Do glass his heart !

[*He enters a recess concealed by the skins of animals
and feather armour.*

Enter CORTES, ALVARADO, SANDOVAL, OYOYOTZIN,
and XENITZIN.

Cor. [To ALVARADO.] No more,—you have done ill !

Alv. You were my tutor !

Cor. Crowds swarm the streets. If they revolt, you,
Priest,

Must forge new oracles and plainly show them
Their Gods are with us. So shall fear unnerve them.

Oyo. No, here I halt ; though hating Montezuma,
I'm of the Mexicans. Yon murderer's hands

Reek with their blood. [Points to ALVARADO.

Alv. [Striking him.] Dog !

Cor. [Sternly to ALVARADO.] If you heap the fire
You madly kindled, fire that may consume us,
I'll name your deed and have its forfeit !—Peace !

*Xen.*¹ [Aside.] I do not love my brother ; but he is
mine.

That blow reached me ! [To ALVARADO, who moodily
falls back.] Nay, be not troubled, Chief !

My brother will forget this,—soon as I.

Cor. [To OYOYOTZIN.] No wavering, Priest !—Obey ;
or Montezuma

¹ Brother to Oyoyotzin, the High Priest.

Shall learn your treason, straight. Tabasco's crown
Or a base death?—which do you choose?

Oyo. [*After hesitation.*] The crown.

Xen. [*Aside.*] Weak will! who sways to each side,
fails to both;

Give place to me.

Cor. A guard of musqueteers

Must to the ante-room. See that our cannon
Sweep the front entrance,—you, good Sandoval!

[*SANDOVAL bows and goes out.*]

Should these fierce millions overpower our band,
We've still our ships! Your errand, Priest—
Remember!

[*To ALVARADO.*] You've lost a name; redeem it! Hold
the gates!

[*OYOYOTZIN, XENITZIN, and ALVARADO go out.*]

Now to find Montezuma! [*Going.*]

Mon. [*Coming from recess and confronting him.*] Find
him here!

Cor. My friend!

Mon. Another name!

Cor. Prince! [*Bowing.*]

Mon. No; an hour since,

Dupe was the fitting name; 'tis now avenger!

Cor. [*Aside.*] How like a felon's droops my eye before
him!—

[*Rallying.*] What has chanced?—Speak!

Mon. [*After a pause.*] From out this brooding air the
Gods shall speak!

They bend above thee now; they grasp their bolts!

Cor. [*Forcing a laugh.*] Why do they pause?

Mon. Astounded at thy guilt,

Thou Arch-sin of the world, near whom all crime
Whitens and dwarfs!

Cor. How?

Mon. Friend of Mexico!

Gashed corpses pave her streets, and the sick sun
Abhors his daily watch! Friend of our Gods!

Their limbless statues thank thee ! Friend of Peace,
Herald of Quetzalcoatl ! human blood
Smears the glib Temple-floors which blush with horror !
Perjurer, beware you slip not !

Cor. Have a care ;
My guard's at hand !

Mon. Fool, when I lost my faith
In thee, I lost my fear ! I've borne for right
The name of coward ; shall I dread thy guard ?

*[Distant shouts are heard, accompanied by the sound
of martial instruments.]*

Cor. What's that ?

Mon. Ha !

Cor. Speak ! What mean those sounds ?

Mon. Guess ! Canst thou ?

Cor. The people rise !

Mon. Ay, like a deluge ! The wild waste of war
Foams onward. Strain thine eyes and catch new crests
That are the vans of seas. They meet, they roll,
They dash against thy base ! Hark, hark !

*[The roar of the multitude, war-music, &c., &c., is
heard at the gates without.]*

Cor. *[Aside.]* The Saints
Befriend us ! We're a handful and must fly.
Ho, Sandoval ! *[SANDOVAL and an officer enter.]* Cut
through them to the bridges !

Mon. *[Exultingly.]* They're broken down !

Cor. Then to the ships.

*[The apartment is suddenly illuminated by the reflec-
tion of fire.]*

Mon. Look, look !

Cor. That fire ?

Mon. Comes from thy burning ships !
Thou'rt on an island-rock ; there cling and famish,
Or leap into the gulf ! It soars, it soars !

*[He rushes to a window. Clamour of Mexican
troops without.]*

Cor. Appease the people. Save us, and we'll quit
The land for ever !

Mon. Alvarado's head !

Cor. Then be their blood upon thee.

*[He draws back the curtain of the vestibule, in which
are discovered Spanish soldiers with levelled
muskets. The Mexicans are seen raging with-
out, through the open window.]*

See those engines,
The iron throats of death ! Appease them !

[Catches MONTEZUMA's robe.]

Mon.

Off !

Cor. Fire !—Cannon !

*[A volley from muskets, succeeded by one from
artillery.]*

Mon. *[Rushing forward.]* My brave people ! See 'tis I,
'Tis Montezuma !

*[The Mexicans overpower the Spaniards and rush in.
Chorus of Mexicans. Long live Montezuma !]*

“MONTEZUMA,” an unpublished Tragedy.

THE COQUETTE.

LAURA HALLERTON, A WOMAN OF FASHION, STRIVES TO WIN
THE AFFECTIONS OF TEMPLE FROM FLORENCE DELMAR.

Tem. I cannot bar her image from my thought.
Here too has art shaped in her costlier mould,
The vision of the Carthaginian Queen.

[Advances to a statue of Dido.]

O stone ! Thou hast more life than breathing forms,
Save her thou copiest. What sorcery
Masters my will and conscience ? In this frame
Two lives are struggling. Now the syren's strain
Allures me unresisting, and anon,
Between its pauses, glides a purer sound,
As 'twere the whisper of some watching star,

The echo of first love. Back ! back, while yet
 The finer instinct sways me. I'll from hence.
 From hence ? What ! quit the charmèd sphere of grace,
 Ambition, power—the sun to which all spheres
 Beside, are earths ? Yet, there to live and peril
 For honour's show—itself ! The right being clear,
 I'll think no more, but act. Who ponders, falls !

[*As he is about to go, LAURA enters. He turns again to the statue.*]

Laura. [*After a short pause.*] You must no more
 peruse my face in stone ;

I love you not to note it.

Tem. Deign to pardon——

Laura. Sir, what offence ?

Tem. Perhaps an unmeant freedom.

Laura. Wait till I chide you for it. Your report
 Of this life-mocking semblance ?

Tem. Wondrous skill ;
 Your look, mould, gesture, air !

Laura. The whole design
 Offends me. Round my form the Sculptor throws
 The haughty Dido's mantle. See, the foot
 Advanced, the head thrown back, the stately height ¹
 Proclaim a Queen ; no woman weak as I.

Tem. 'Twas well devised.

Laura. You deem, then, pride becomes me ?

Tem. When you *are* proud ; when humble—humble-
 ness ;

When mournful—sorrow. Differing qualities
 Become your mind as various garbs reveal
 Alike one symmetry.

¹ Qualis in Eurotæ ripis, aut per juga Cynthi
 Exercet Diana choros, quam mille secutæ
 Hinc atque hinc glomerantur Oreades : illa pharetram
 Fert humero, *gradiensque Deas supereminet omnes* :
 Latonæ, tacitum pertendant gaudia pectus.
 Talis erat Dido.—*Æneid*, B. I. v. 502.

Laura. [*Aside.*] The ice breaks up ;
 We'll have the current soon.—You're as the rest.
 You treat me to the opiate,—soothe the child
 With flattery's comfit. There might lurk a heart
 'Neath all her humours,—but who cares to find it?
 And yet I would not have you think me proud.

Tem. [*Aside.*] Those gentle tones are subtler than the
 air,

And steep the brain in music.

LAURA [*As if absorbed, and directing her eyes to the
 statue.*] There she stands.

Poor lady! Hapless queen !

Tem. You sigh !

Laura. A passing thought.

How might her regal port, that thousands awed,
 Have drooped to trembling bashfulness at sight
 Of stern Æneas, who so slowly learned
 A love he learned—to scorn ! Oh, had he fled
 Her passion in its dawn !

Tem. He guessed it not.

Laura. He might have done—(for countless heralds,
 Love

Sends on to sound his coming)—by her voice,
 Wont to command, yet for *his* ear subdued
 To faltering whispers ; by her eye, whose glance
 Was silent fate, yet sank beneath his own,
 As if its leave to worship were a bliss
 Beyond its asking. He was blind ! Be sure
 That woman loves who, haughty in the crowd,
 Grows humble when with one.

Tem. So melts her voice ;
 Her eyes so sink ! How to translate this? Fool !
 This dalliance is guilt. My love ! My honour !

[*Aside.*

Laura. Your silence speaks. You deem my flippant lip
 Profanes a theme so tender ! Well ; believe me
 The gilded emptiness, the costly toy,
 The rest account me. I can bear it.

Tem.

I—

I wrong thee, lady ! Ah, you little guess——

Laura. You will not judge me harshly ?

Tem.

Harshly !

Laura.

No.

I'm sure you will not. Thanks ! [*Giving her hand.*] I'm bold ; forgive

The heart's glad impulse. I'd control it——

Tem. [*Retaining her hand.*]

Nay ;

The gaoler pines when such fair captive's freed.

Laura. The captive mourns to break so kind a chain.

And yet it must be. In the charity

Of your best moments, if you deign to think

Of me, think thus—that in life's giddy masque,

The visor oft belies the face beneath.

[*She goes slowly out.*]

“THE HEART AND THE WORLD,” a play.

WOUNDED LOVE.

FLORENCE DELMAR, UNDER A FICTITIOUS NARRATIVE,
TAXES HER SUITOR WITH HIS ESTRANGED AFFECTION.

Tem. What moves you thus ?

Flo.

That which I read. And yet,

'Tis a stale sorrow ; but a woman's wrong.

[*Offering the book.*]

Tem. [*Taking it.*] You give these moods of sentiment,
these dreams

Of fancy too much sway. I pray you, Florence,

Follow example and conform your course

To custom, and the fashion of the times.

[*Carelessly opening the book.*]

What air-spun grief o'erwrought you ?

Flo.

I have said,

A common theme. You'd know it ? Years ago

A maiden gave her faith in trust to one

Who after found its custody a burthen.

Fame, courtlier manners, more instructed smiles
 Made his vows—fettters. When she heard, she wept not.
 Her whole heart was one frozen tear. Alas!
 She was a simple girl and had not learned
 The fashion of the times.

Tem. A foolish girl !

What she supposed reluctance might be prudence.

Flo. The fashion of the times calls falsehood so ?

Tem. But he did not desert her !

Flo. You have read

The story then ?

Tem. I say, whate'er his sins,
 His honour bound him keep the oath he pledged—
 He kept his word.

Flo. And for his honour's sake !
 Oh, pardon me : he did *not* keep his word.
 He vowed a heart whose tribute was its life,
 A love should leap to hers like flame to flame !
 He gave her—what ? A hesitating hand
 Because his honour bade him. Oh, she meant
 Her love to be his trophy, not his chain !

Tem. He would have wed her. 'Twas his oath's extent.
 What could he more than yield the rights she claimed ?

Flo. The *rights* !

Tem. Yes ; I concede the rights.

Flo. The rights of love.
 They are so easily phrased—so soon restored ;
 Heart-strings a touch untunes, a touch repairs.
 O Sir, thou canst not love ! Love has no rights ;
 It does not know the word. Earth's substance ta'en,
 Earth's laws may give thee back. Thy fair repute
 Maligned, earth's laws may vindicate. But love
 That in it has no property of earth—
 Has no appeal there. Rights it casts away,
 Is proud to be defenceless ; all its bond
 The nature it confides in. Break that bond,
 It feels its beggary—but pleads no rights.

“THE HEART AND THE WORLD.”

LOVE AND FRIENDSHIP.

OH! speech is poor to paint a difference
 I feel so vast! Trust, honour, tenderness—
 The all that friendship asks—compose not love!
 Friendship still keeps distinction. Friends are twain,
 But lovers one!

Friends are two kings in dear confederance join'd,
 That still rule *separate* empires; but in love
 Both realms united, take one name, one tongue,
 One law, one faith, one consequence, one crown!
 Friends are two banks a kindly stream divides;
 Lovers—twin clouds into each other blent
 And bath'd in the same beam. Friends are like trees
 That stand with arms enlaced but parted roots;
 But that we love is grafted on one stem,
 Fed with our sap, and nurtur'd by our dews,
 And wither'd in our blight!

“THE HEART AND THE WORLD.”

LOVE'S REVERIE.

[*To Anne de Vignelles, her attendant and confidant.*]

Marie. Hast thou ne'er in dreams
 Seen fairer sights than ever day revealed?

Anne. Even so.

Marie. And when the sun's rekindled beams
 Awoke thee from that blissful trance of night,
 Seemed not his glorious face a very cloud,
 Contrasted with the splendours of thy sleep?

Anne. Why ask?

Marie. To show thee we may sometimes see
 More things, and lovelier too, than our eyes rest on.

Anne. And have you seen such?

Marie. Aye; so deeply, too,
 That I can see nought else. I'm happy, Anne!
 For I may tell thee that as scenes of day
 Are poor to those of sleep, sleep's are excelled
 By the revealings of one heavenly mood

That plays 'twixt dreams and wakefulness—a mood
 Where hope so blesses, that we scarce desire
 Its consummation, and our thought becalmed
 Before the future lies, in doubt if all
 The realm beyond can match the shore that bounds it ;
 When truth surpassing fancy, nought so fair
 Imagination pictures as the world
 We are unto ourselves ; when Nature owes us
 More than she gives of beauty ; when the sun,
 The stream, the mountain, from our fulness take
 New glory, grace and grandeur, while we pass
 On our free way—debtors to none but God !

“MARIE DE MÉRANIE,” 1st Edition.

MARIE'S IDEAL.

Marie. Thou art ill to please. Come ! Sketch me
 The paragon might match thee.

Anne. By my wit
 I'll find out if she love. [*Aside.*] Then, first, of course,
 I'd have him young ; in nature grand but tender ;
 In mien like Mars, when, past the strife of Gods,
 Venus' soft hands remove his unlaced helm ;
 As Saturn, sage ; as Bacchus, brimmed with life ;
 And bland as Mercury.

Marie. Well ! aught beside !

Anne. I'd have him famed in tourney and in war of life
 As lavish as of love.

Marie. Lavish of life !
 The panther is so when he gnaws the javelin,
 The wild boar when he rushes on the spear.
 No ; he who loves his being, in whose eyes
 The world is beautiful, who clings to life,
 And then for justice, freedom—for the wronged
 And helpless—if need be—adventures it,
 Yea, loses it, contented—he's the hero !
 The man's not brave who never feared to die !

“MARIE DE MÉRANIE,” 1st Edition.

GENIUS.

O GLORIOUS thought, not with the frame's decay
The life and office of man's spirit ends ;
Its inspiration dwells enshrined in act.
A Statue's silence is the Sculptor's voice.
The Painter's immortality resides
In his own forms, and objects. Attitude,
Expression, light, and shade, the tint so fine
It half eludes the eye,—for Earth retain,
In Death's despite, his soul !—And he around
Whose pathway lingered haunting harmonies—
Spirits of Beauty tenanting a sound,—
Lives in his record of their ministry !
Poets, and Sages, thus perpetuate
Their being in the words that, age by age,
Fulfil their lofty ends ! Their speech sublime,
Inspires the general heart ; their beauty steals,
Brightening and purifying, through the air
Of common life ; the Patriot wakes the soul
Of apathetic nations, with their breath
To Freedom's energies ; their language gives
Voice to Love's mysteries ; the evening hearth
Grows shrine-like, when is hymned their holy chaunt
Of social concord ; and their pathos speaks
With a Friend's accent to the desolate !
The thought that they were men makes other men
Exult in manhood ; and Eternity
Preaching Hereafter to the world, attests
Her Gospel by their deeds ! And thus the Sons
Of Genius have prerogative to stand
Exempt from Time's decree ; immutable
In change ! Though since they were inurned,
States have sprung up,—and died ; barbaric lands
Acquired refinement ; or realms civilised
Relapsed to old barbarity ;—albeit,
Since they trod Earth, the far posterity

Of empires then unknown, in darkness sleep ;
 Though marvels of their day have dimly waned
 To vague tradition ;—Luxury destroyed
 The fresh simplicities of primal life,
 And added wants to Nature's ;—Science ploughed
 Earth's once calm brow in furrows, or proclaimed
 New worlds in space ;—still the Perpetual Few
 Survive in what they wrought, and sit enthroned,—
 Tutelar Spirits of Humanity !

“GERALD,” *a Dramatic Poem.*

MAN AND CIRCUMSTANCE.

EACH Philosophy

Is centered in the being of the Sage—
 Or Fool, mayhap—terms are indifferent.
 A general error oft is private truth ;
 What's falsehood here, is there veracity ;
 The right hand's nothing is the left hand's all !
 For natures as they limit, or expand,
 Determine faith or doubt,—ourselves the bound
 To our own fate. That Caterpillar's bliss
 Is in luxuriant idleness to crawl
 O'er the sweet leaves of roses, wondering
 Why yonder Bee should wear his wings with toil
 Touring from flower to flower. Perchance the Bee
 Much marvels that the Ringdove builds her nest
 So high, that garden odours, and the scent
 Of thyme-banks reach it not. That very Dove
 Hath never solved the charm the Martlet finds
 In eaves of human dwellings ; unto him
 'Tis mystery why the kingly Eagle dwells
 On the rock's lonely peak. We but record
 Ourselves in what we call our destiny,
 As full tides flood and neap tides show the sand.

“GERALD.”

THE TRUTHS OF IMAGINATION.

FICTION ! Poetry
 Lives but by truth. Truth is its heart. Bards write
 The life of soul—the only life. Each line
 Breathes life—or nothing. Fiction ! Who narrates
 The stature of a man, his gait, his dress,
 The colour of his hair, what meats he loved,
 Where he abode, what were his favourite haunts
 His place and time of birth, his age at death,
 And how much crape and cambric mourned his end—
 Writes a *biography* ! But who records
 The yearnings of the heart, its joys, and pangs,
 Its alternating apathy, and hope,
 Its stores of memory which the richer grow
 The longer they are hived, its faith that stands
 Upon the grave, and counts it as a beach
 Whence souls embark for home, its prayers for man,
 Its trust in Heaven, despite of man—writes *fiction* !
 Get a new lexicon.

“GERALD.”

INFLUENCES OF NATURE.

AH ! Nature can reproach as well as soothe.
 To her may Virtue from the world repair
 For health and consolation ; nor in vain.
 For in her youth perpetually renewed,
 Procession calm, and unsuspended life—
 Is symbolised the tranquil might of Love,
 And Truth's serene immutability.
 Thus, still, by holier minds the type is hailed
 As earnest of a human altitude,
 Hereafter to be won. But idly here
 Shall vexed Ambition or worn Avarice court
 Repose and vigour. In their order due
 VOL. II.

The plains resume their verdure, and the hills
 Still turn their wonted aspects to the skies !
 Still planets keep their trysting time with Earth !
 Still Ocean laves the shores, and emulates
 The rock-tower with his billow ! Constant Day
 Still wakes the world which the unfailing Night
 Still kindly wins to slumber—as though ne'er
 Lean, quivering hands had piled enjoyless hoards,
 Nor the long crash of falling thrones disturbed
 Rapt Nature's heaven-bound ear. O ! he alone,
 May seek in time for solace, who can look
 Beyond it for his bliss.

“GERALD.”

TWILIGHT.

It is a lovely twilight ! Tree-browed hills
 And rivers as they roll their lucid course,
 Relieved by chequered intervals of shade,
 And that pure single star, the pioneer
 Of astral legions—in its loneliness,
 Figure of genius that doth long time shine
 In pensive solitude ere meaner souls,
 That boast not half its light, troop forth to join it—
 These sights long dumb at last renew their speech,
 I hear them as of old ; my youth returns
 In every faculty, but that of hope.

“PATRICIAN'S DAUGHTER,” *1st Edition.*

SONNETS.

SONNETS.

TO THE IDEAL.

BELOVED Ideal ! If one selfish aim
Has mingled with my worship ; if to stand
A chosen knight or priest at thy right hand,
Or on thy sacred tablets leave my name,
Has been a wish detracting from thy claim
To pure heart-service—of thy grace, command
The tempter from me. In the humble band
Of acolytes who tend thy holy flame,
Or, chanting, scatter incense on thy shrine,
May I be lost—a voice to swell the song,
Though none discern the face of him who sings,
One of the blest but undistinguished throng
Who, gazing rapt upon thy mien divine,
Is hidden in the incense which he swings,

FAITH.

YES, life has mysteries. A day serene
Tempts forth, to the returning waiter's ire,
Our budding joys that to their bloom aspire,
Which, withered, hint the flower that might have been ;
Life's unplucked laurels o'er the grave are green ;
Or, else, the boon comes late. Love's rose of fire
Or fame's vain wreath crown brows of dead desire.
Such is our present ; while a mist doth screen
The far beyond.—Yet, courage ! Faith is born
Not of vicissitude, but of the soul.
She from the sharp horizon and near goal
Of Visible Plan would turn, with lofty scorn,
To where, around the peaks, the vapours roll,
And o'er the vapours reigns the Star of Morn.

GRIEF'S LETHARGY.

OH, there is ruth in Fate since her dire blows
 Stun while they crush us. In thy vacant room,
 Where all yet speaks of thee, in torpid gloom
 I wait expecting, till the door uncloses
 And shows thee entering. Do I sleep? The throes
 Of passionate grief are spent; the tide of Doom
 Breaks faint, and like some soothing river flows.
 This dream is sweet. Thou art not in the tomb;
 I catch thy foot-fall! Still in thee I live,
 Spring of my joys and bound to all my ends!—
 Vague terrors gird me still. Sweet, angel-friends,
 O, let no cruel waking ere arrive!
 Lull me in stupor while I hope her kiss,
 And, dying, let me stumble into bliss.

AT BRUGES.

MESEEMS it, sweet, that like a life I know
 Is this old city. Here, where tower and square
 Lift fissured faces into the bright air,
 Here once did falchions glitter, trumpets blow,
 While windows blushed with flags, as, with the glow
 Of blood, a manly cheek. From the altar stair
 A people armed did the Priest's blessing bear,
 Then, fighting, rushed on heaven. To-night, full slow
 The broad barge parts the lilies in the stream,
 The past is dead, save where in churches gleam
 Lights o'er the city's heroes—now her saints;
 So, in one desolate heart, howe'er it faints
 With thoughts of things that have been, is a shrine
 Where earth's translated love is now divine.

THE HEART'S SILENCE.

AND thou art gone! Do I bewail thee? Not,
 If wail needs words. Even tears refuse to flow.
 Placid, I walk life's daily round; and, so,
 The world may deem me peaceful—thee forgot.

Alas, alas, cold heart ! men little know
 That on the near and clement side of woe
 Dwell every conscious grief. A sterner lot
 Is frigid torpor, 'neath Fate's Arctic snow.
 Test not the soul by obvious signs of gloom,
 Save thou have insight. From some citadel,
 Where falls a Queen amid her slaughtered train,
 No cry goes forth—no cannon's sullen boom.
 The hands are stiff that should have rung the knell
 Judge the land loyal by its silent slain.

THE HEART'S EVIDENCE.

TIDES that encroach and make the plain a sea ;
 Tides that recede and make the sea a plain ;
 Loud cities that, where once waved grass and grain,
 Send up your towers and flags ; ye tendrils free—
 Ivy and vine—that unrebukedly
 The stones that once were cities clasp and chain,
 Preach, if ye will, that all things change and wane,
 And that man's spirit soon no more shall be :
 But though the world from which Columbus sailed,
 The world he sailed to and the seas between,
 Should cry—the dreams of life to come deceive ;
 I, sweet, remembering thy faith serene
 And quenchless love, should there find countervailed
 The witness of both worlds, and still believe.

ASPIRATION.

I SPEAK to thee, as if thou wouldst reply,
 I speak of thee, as if I knew thee near ;
 This strain of grief is meant to reach thine ear ;
 And thus, 'twixt soul and sense, perplexedly,
 Even in wailing that thou com'st not, I
 Turn to thee with my wail. What things appear
 Are shadows, and the things unseen are clear.
 What may this be that doth intensify
 Presence by absence and swell life by death ?
 Oh, blest, if I thy soul's diviner breath

Have so drawn in that henceforth, I and thou
 Are names for one existence, whole and part ;
 That thou in heaven my being may'st avow,
 And I say here—while yet I am, thou art !

IMMORTALITY.

AN INFERENCE.

IF I had lived ere seer or priest unveiled
 A life to come, methinks that, knowing thee,
 I should have guessed thine immortality ;
 For Nature, giving instincts, never failed
 To give the ends they point to. Never quailed
 The swallow, through air-wilds, o'er tracts of sea,
 To chase the Summer ; seeds that prisoned be
 Dream of and find the daylight. Unassailed
 By doubt, impelled by yearnings for the main,
 The creature river-born doth there emerge ;
 So thou, with thoughts and longings which our earth
 Can never compass in its narrow verge,
 Shalt the fit region of thy spirit gain,
 And death fulfil the promptings of thy birth.

SCENES IN NORMANDY.¹

I. A VILLAGE BY THE SEA.

CHEQUER'D with amber light the elm-fringed lane
 Unto the ancient hamlet-spire has wound ;
 Below lie brown-thatched cots by gardens bound,
 Or orchards that slope gently to the main.

¹ This Sonnet, and those that follow, so thoroughly violate the order and limitations of rhyme proper to such composition, that they can only be called Sonnets by the reader's indulgence. They were composed some years since, when the restrictions, as to form, of this kind of poem seemed to the writer arbitrary and artificial—an opinion which he has seen reason to alter. In spirit, however, they aim at some degree of correctness, confining themselves—according to the law of the Sonnet—to a simple premise and conclusion.

The touring bee, late from the fragrant bells
 Of thyme, wings home to his own minstrelsy.
 Day fades ; and now in dim gray flakes the sea
 Breaks on the meads with soothing tempered sound.
 Not only in wide bays where navies ride,
 'Neath soaring cliffs and skyey citadels
 Charged with a nation's thunder, rolls the tide
 Echoing the infinite ; but softly swells
 On the meek vale where village history tells—
 "These simple peasants sowed and reaped and died."

II. BONNEVILLE.

GRAY walls that crowned the wooded slope while yet
 William was only Duke and Harold rode
 'Mid lusty Thanes in England ! here abode
 The Conqueror ; trumpets blared and steeds did fret
 What time he issued from the clanging hall ;
 Here the lit windows at each festival
 Told men at sea, " Our William feasts to-night !"—
 Now all is still ; odour of new-milked kine
 Sweetens the air, clematis veils the arch,
 O'er the green moat the laden pear tree bends.
 Ivy-cowled time hath taught with voice divine
 The moral of the ages as they march,
 And the old pile rests like a convertile
 Whose Pagan wrath in Christian meekness ends.

III. WAYSIDE CROSSES.

I LOVE those wayside crosses seen abroad ;
 Whether they rise by grey-walled towns to say—
 When entering haunts of men, think first of God—
 Or bend from laney nooks that skirt the bay,
 Where the sea frets in twilight, and low prayers
 Of Fisher's wife and child ascend to heaven,
 Where Ocean's voice is not more loud than theirs ;
 Or when, as now, o'er heights in battle riven

The sacred sign soars red with sunset's fire,
 As though the warrior ages then had shriven
 Their burden'd souls. Lord, let this be my desire—
 That if thou build my fortunes fair and tall,
 That sign may witness whence their strength was given,
 Or consecrate their ruin if they fall.

ENGLAND.

WRITTEN AT THE TIME OF THE REVOLT IN INDIA.

HEAR despots shout, while in our England's path
 India like a volcano vomits rage—
 "The hour is come so longed for age by age ;
 The Sea-Queen shrinks before this tide of wrath
 And reels with backward steps to her decay !"
 Be that as God appoints it, yea or nay ;
 But at the worst our England's epitaph
 Shall roll more grandly from the lips of Time
 Than names of living rule upheld by crime ;
 "For in this land, from cliff to inmost strath,"
 It shall be said, "no crouching serf was seen,
 No vassal mind ; the indebted world retained
 The hope of freedom while she yet remained,
 Or has it now because she once has been."

ON THE RIVER.

WHEN cast with thee I cleft this curving flood,
 It was a day so blest, it sure took rise,
 Not from our later suns, but owned the blood
 Of orbs benign that set in Paradise.
 The sky, like love, whose dream of perfect worth
 Clothes the beloved, and what it glorifies
 Deems glorious, wrapt the world below in light.
 We paused, and cried, "How beautiful is Earth !"
 I float alone beneath the stars to-night,
 Nor see the verdure of the banks or trees,

Nor the lost face that turns no more to these,
And thence to me, making the bright more bright.
My only radiance from on high is given ;
I gaze and sigh, " How beautiful is Heaven ! "

THE HOME BEYOND.

'Twas half a life since, and the Christmas sun
That laved the leafless grove had ebb'd away
To the last fiery wave : the air was dun,
Clouds gathered, burst, and earth all snow-wound lay.
From the hearth's glow unto the beaten pane
A maiden stepp'd ; when sudden one drew rein,
And cried, " I come." He deemed her bridal wreath
To twine of new-year snowdrops. When above
The mould they peered, she placid slept beneath.
Boast not thy triumph, Death ; she passed—not love.
Still the same rider on a track doth fare
By sterner winters frozen, blanched and bare ;
And still beyond the track he sees a home,
And whispers, as he journeys, " Love, I come ! "

PEACE AND WAR.

MAN is God's living temple, and the hand
Is impious that, for conquest, gain, or hate,
The hallow'd walls of flesh would desecrate
With bloody violence. For ever banned
Be they that joy in war ! But since no fane
Exists but for a worship, and our Lord,
Being Lord of Justice, still is Lord of Hosts,
When 'neath the oppressor's yoke the lands complain,
Or thought and freedom fly the invaded coasts,—
Deem it religion then to bear the sword !
The fortress is a temple in that hour,
A priest the chief who fights for Right with Power.
Strike down even man for what makes man divine,
Nor disobey the God to save the shrine !

GENIUS.

IN its deep essence, genius means but worth ;
For who would paint the various qualities
Of man and nature, trace their growth and birth,
Must make their being his by sympathies,
Whose root is love. Thus, genius in the bad
Is still the reflex of a better life
There lingering, though with splendour shorn and sad.
Love draws the circle of imagination,
And in the heart's full day the wide creation
Lies clear, in beauty garb'd, with meaning rife ;
And as love's sun declines, so fancy's ken
Contracts, and the mean will doth only crave
Light for itself, forgets the world and men,
And on its dim path stumbles to the grave !

LOVE : A WOMAN'S THOUGHT.

SHALL I set any blessing this side heaven
Against thy love for me—the light that shows
All other joy, the light whereby it grows ?
Yes, one boon richer than thy love is given—
The right to love thee ! If thy strength of wing
Can bear me with thee to thy luminous sphere
Of duty, take me ; but I would not cling
With an encumbering clasp to keep thee here.
'Tis dear to think thee of myself a part ;
More dear, though lost, to know thee what thou art :
And if, being such, thou vanish from my eyes,
I, nursing thoughts of thee, will wait the day
When at my side a shadowy friend shall say,—
“Thou, too, hast pinions ; follow him and rise !”

POEMS.

POEMS.

A LOST LIFE.

SPIRITS that haunt the secret heart of woods ;
Or the cool banks, through which the crystal blood
Of Nature flows ; or glide on mountain airs
Down the green depths, then tremulous with joy ;—
Come at my cry and hear me, Nymphs divine !

I do not call ye with the brother's voice
Ye erst obeyed ; a brother's bond I broke ;
Nor send my cry forth o'er the cataract
Of wrath that drowned it ; nor with sinful arts
Allure ye to false worship. I am lone ;
I have no idol now ; the temple frail
I built her is in ruins, and its stones
Are my hard pillow.

But as dying men,
By the brief madness of hot blood estranged
From those they love, stretch penitential hands
Through the dim mists of time, and feel the clasp
And hear the tones of those they scarce discern,
I call ye ; and ye answer. Ye are here.

What omens waited on my birth ye know—
How great Apollo to my mother's couch
In vision came, placed on my brow a wreath,
And in my baby hands, which on the gift
Instinctive closed, a many-voicèd lyre.
Thus set apart for high and solemn use,
He bade her bear me to your mystic haunts.

This when she did, ye found and nursed the babe,
Nursed him with awe and pity, for ye saw—
What time ye stooped to guide his steps—the brows
Where once was laid the finger of a God.

Ah, sisters, I forget not when adown
Hymettus' marble caves from noon-day heat,
Ye led the boy and with your vine-wreathed hands
Waved o'er his honeyed lips the bursting grape :
This I forget not ; nor, in later years
The sea-washed gorge through which the steeds of Day
Bore proudly westward till their golden hoofs
Glanced in the brine. Then all the surges sang ;
Then, in the distant plain, Pan tuned his reed
To Echo, and the Satyrs held their breath.

There lies my broken lyre. 'Twas ye who taught
My youth its mystery. It became a voice
To the dumb world. I struck ; the shout of dawn
Rang from its strings. It told the rushing floods
The secret of their joy. The whispering pines
Stooped in amaze to hear their thought expressed.
The deep blue eve listened its own sweet soul
Till the swift night o'ertook it with the stars.
Then through the stillness poured the hymn of orbs,
As, through a thicket, many meeting rills.

A change drew near. Divine Apollo's will
Ye bade me know, and why he had ordained
Your guardian care—that I should leave these vales
And cross blue ocean's line to land remote.

“There,” said ye, “brood less genial skies. By love
The elements, yet unallied, make war
For separate rule. The untempered winds, like brothers
At feud, lay waste their joint inheritance
And with their dire affray obscure the heavens.
As is the clime, so are the dwellers ; men
In envy strive. The tyrant of to-day
Treads on the slave who tyrannized before.

' Yet mixed with these are kindlier sojourners—
 Seekers of peace whose souls excel their fate,
 Who list if haply, through the pausing din,
 A God should speak. They, when thy lyre is heard,
 Shall gather round, and thou, across the deep
 Shalt guide them hither ; for Apollo wills
 That in these groves they learn his hallowed rites,
 And with his gracious worship fill the world."

Ye spake ; and then, with consecrating tears,
 And the far-following blessings of your eyes,
 Dismissed me, gently pained, but strong in love.

I left these bounds, and seaward took my way,
 When, from a rock's projecting shade, emerged
 The fairest Calyce. I call her fair,
 Though woe possessed her—utter woe, revealed
 In her loose, wind-swept tresses ; in her feet,
 Aimless and bleeding, though they gleamed in the light
 Like sun-kissed springs ; and in the casual glance,
 Piercing yet wandering, of her fringed eyes.

A friendly skiff had borne her to the shore,
 In quest of false Evathlus. Him when sick
 The maid had nursed, till, 'neath the summer shade,
 By the soft languor of departed pain
 And her sweet solace won, he vowed her love.
 But he, a hunter bred, as strength returned,
 Pined for the abandoned chase. By night he fled,
 And with his comrades sought the further shore.
 Straight she pursued him, saying in her heart—
 " If found, he will relent ; or, if I die,
 He may behold me perish in his path."

With brief demand she asked me of his course,
 And then, her hope unsatisfied, reeled by.
 As when a labouring bark casts her vain line
 To watchers on the shore, then onward sweeps
 She gazed on me and drifted to the woods.

Hear, ye unfallen, how I fell. My soul
Had shrunk from sin confessed ; a gate of light'
Betrayed me unto darkness. Ye yourselves
Had taught me pity ; and, by pity moved,
My hasty steps o'ertook her. "Rest," I cried ;
"Rest on this thymy knoll, for thou art worn
By grief and travel. I, with buoyant foot,
Will cross the plains and scale yon winding height,
To seek thy lost and bring him where thou art."

I went ; nor from my bootless search returned
Till the day failed. She looked into my face,
And, from the rifled garden of her heart,
Plucked one pale smile to thank me. Not the charm
Of her fresh, shining beauty who at birth
Shook off the clinging raiment of the sea ;
Not the imperial, condescending gaze
Of her who sits by Jove, had so enthralled
My soul as this pale sorrow. Loth to part
From her sore need ; yet pondering the command
Of the Light-Giver and the unsuccoured hearts
That waited for my lyre, I dubious stood.
But when the rising night-wind smote her frame,
Insidious love, that spake with pity's voice,
Beguiled and held me ; and I vowed to track
Evathlus with her by each rock and glen.

Vain was our quest, for so the Gods decreed ;
But still at sundown when her arm untwined
And left me free, I vowed another day ;
Till once, through a long grove of cypresses,
A moaning wind pursued us, and methought
Its wail was human. With a freight of sighs
It came—so deemed I—from those lands afar
Where I was destined. My reverting eyes
Bred phantoms in the mist. On a bleak ridge
Gray men relaxed their feeble, outstretched arms
And murmured to their sons—"Not in our time—

Not in our time, though we have waited long—
Comes the Deliverer ! ” And the cold, blank sea
Laughed hoarsely as it broke, “ He doth not come.”

Oh, then, as from a gulf one flash reveals,
I staggered from the maid and cried—“ We part !
It must be ; the Gods strengthen both ! We part ! ”
“ Go ! ” she replied ; “ thou wouldst have saved me ; go !
Thy will is mine, my brother.” As she spoke,
Soft fell her farewell touch, and broke, again,
Her smile of hopeless beauty. Fine as sounds
That lull themselves to silence, or as odours
That steal through all the crevices of sense,
Her smile so wan yet lustrous, as if love
Threw a late beam on Death’s advancing tide,
Flowed through my brain, and all my heights of will
Lay levelled in its flood ; we did not part.

Nay, blame not her. The Delian God’s behest,
Spurned for her sake, she knew not—little knew
How, while with fond, extenuating love
She mourned her hunter fled, my longing swelled
In the dumb heart that pent it. Ah, to her
All things recalled Evathlus—him alone !
Oft her hand quivered like a moonbeam pale,
Amid the myrtles as she sighed, “ Of these
With roses linked he wove me wreaths for pastime ! ”
Ah, had she guessed that but to plait the weeds
Beneath her feet and bind them on my brow,
I would have dashed Apollo’s laurels thence—
Yea, if divine, have abdicated heaven !

It soothes me now to think she never guessed
My passion. Oh, ’twas mad ; ’twas impious !
For, in my secret heart, I said, “ Let Jove,
Reckless of woe, drain Hebe’s mantling cup
And pledge the obsequious Gods ! The Nereids,
Applauding in his wake let old Neptuneus
Submerge fair isles for sport and Triton blow

His shell while wretches perish? Deep in hell
 (Grasping Prosèrpine's arm, whose dreaming eyes
 Yearn across Phlegethon for Sicily)
 Let the grim Orcus plot new pangs for men,
 And the anticipating Furies toss
 Their serpent locks and shake the impatient scourge—
 Let all whose joy is human bale conspire
 To slay or punish love, to love I cleave!
 To thee, O Calyce, alone, I bow;
 The grief the Gods cast out I make a God!"

So we abode together; and, each dawn,
 From the green bower I built her, wandered forth,
 Refreshed by running springs, by way-side fruits
 And cates that the glad shepherds gave in fee
 For minstrel's craft; and but returned at eve
 When voyaging fire-flies ploughed the evening air
 In emerald furrows. Silently we fared;
 She lost in thoughts of him who came not back,
 I lost in thoughts of her. One night it fell,
 To vent and so (if that might be) assuage
 Despairing love, I left her and communed
 In secret with my grief till sudden dawn
 Fringed the pale sea. Swift, I retraced my path.
 Morn glowed, life was astir—in fisher's cry,
 In call of early hind, and bleat of goat,
 When, high o'er these, rang from the distant hills
 The hunter's brazen horn, so abrupt and shrill
 I half recoiled, and, cautious, gazed around,
 As I had been his quarry—not the boar.

By fate or instinct led, I climbed the heights;
 Then the sheer path pursued that downward bore
 Into the deep, dim glen, where prostrate lay
 A stirless form—the form of Calyce!
 What need of words to speak my pangs? Enough
 'Twas I who gazed; 'twas she who prostrate lay.

If the approaching horn her hurrying steps

Had drawn unto the verge, with hope to stay
 Evathlus ; if the yielding earth had lapsed
 Beneath her eager feet ; or in despair—
 Since all that was her light fled by with him—
 She had willing plunged to darkness—who relates ?
 One pure as ye is vanished. Never more
 Shall these, her haunts, behold her. The lone pines
 Wail for the Dryad, and the Nymphless stream
 Sings only to the woods. A slender urn
 Holds all she was—holds all my universe.

Smit by the angry God for grievous sin—
 His message unconveyed, his gracious will
 And sacred rites untaught, this feeble heart
 Giving to one the love decreed for all,
 My aimless life fades out. The light that shines
 Through space upbraids me ; the soft, wooing airs
 Lull, but restore not. A more docile soul,
 Of purer vision and of wider love,
 With strength for combat, shall Apollo send
 To bless the lands. For me, his touch divine
 Was laid upon my weakness, and I fell.

But ye, being somewhat less than Gods ; akin
 To earth and mortals, and all transient glories,
 Joys, passions, that have being and expire—
 Ye may our frailty pity. Pity mine !
 Bend down and kiss me, sisters, ere I die.

THE VISION IN THE WOOD.

I.

ESCAPED the noise and whirl of town,
 The feverish toil, the narrow aim
 Of those who struggle for the crown
 Of fortune or of fleeting fame,
 A wearied mind, a heart bereft
 Of trust and love, I with me bore,

Nor sigh'd to quit the land I left,
Nor smiled to reach the further shore.

II.

And yet that new-found coast was fair—
A bay where arching aisles of rock
On each hand lift their spires in air,
And foremost meet the billows' shock.
Behind them winding cliffs expand,
Bright to the brink with waving grain ;
And all the riches of the land
Salute the splendour of the main.

III.

From thence I gazed on folded hills,
On wooded vales or orchards meek ;
Beside their bounds the tinkling rills
Reflect the apple's crimson cheek.
Ah me, how once, in scenes like these,
My heart to Nature's voice had thrill'd,
While by her beauty and her peace
Each meaner thought was hush'd and still'd !

IV.

'Twas something to lament the past,
To feel a yearning faint and low
For the sweet glamour fancy cast
Upon the days of long ago,
As—scanning life's horizon line—
One mourns a love too early set,
And knows his sorrow more divine
Than any joy that lingers yet.

V.

Then, 'neath regret for what had flown,
There stirr'd a tremulous desire—
Like the first gleam of embers blown
Into a fitful, transient fire—

A faltering hope that from its death,
Or seeming death, my soul might rise,
Quick with the life of love and faith—
The life of human sympathies.

VI.

One eve within a tangled wood
I roam'd ere sunset ; pine and oak
And young acacia stemm'd the flood
Of tidal gold that else had broke
In dazzling glory o'er my course ;
Now, glancing through the leafy shade,
It struck the boughs with softening force,
Or, wavering round the stems, it play'd.

VII.

The woodbine quiver'd in its glow ;
The wild bee, with transfigured wing,
Shone as it rose ; the runnel's flow,
When welling from its darksome spring,
Surprised, grew bright ; my spirit, too,
Issuing from depths of sombre thought,
Met the mild splendour as it flew,
And sudden gleams of youth recaught.

VIII.

And saw I, by that magic beam,
The thicket's vista widening yield,
And frame a picture like a dream,
A moving scene—an English field,
An elm-fringed lane, a gabled roof,
A watching face the casement nigh,
Whose smiles were wrought into the woof
And warp of all my destiny.

IX.

Through my tranced brain a voice long hush'd
In subtle music gently wound,

Within my breast old feelings gush'd,
 Responsive to th' invoking sound ;
 And as a sand-lock'd bark once more
 Rocks 'neath the tide's advancing leap,
 My stranded hopes and aims of yore
 Rose buoyant on love's surging deep.

X.

The twilight fell, an amber rain
 Of moonlight steep'd the holy spot—
 Did sense deceive? did fancy feign?—
 Methought a Presence unforget
 Sail'd from the shadow. Never, sooth,
 Did lovelier mien the sight engage—
 Fair as a poet's dream in youth,
 Sweet as its memory in his age.

XI.

If audible utterance then was mine
 I know not ; but my spirit cried
 To her who from the far confine
 Of bliss had wander'd to my side—
 "O, earliest, latest, only love,
 Forgive the heart where thou wast throned,
 Its lapses from the life above,
 Thy better influence disown'd !

XII.

"Forgive me for the scoffer's taunt,
 The worldling's greed of wealth and power,
 Or mean supremacies that vaunt
 Their pageant state, their transient hour ;
 Forgive the doubt of human worth,—
 How could he doubt, who knew thine own?—
 Forgive the will that found in earth
 The immortal spirit's goal and zone.

XIII.

“Lo, here at thy dear feet I fling
This sordid self—again aspire,
Again count love a holy thing,
And duty dearer than desire ;
And doing good in humble ways
A joy beyond the reach of fame,
And right more blest with God to praise
Than wrong with all the world’s acclaim !”

XIV.

The vision waned ; I gained the steep ;
The moonlit hamlet smiled below ;
A path of splendour cross’d the deep ;
From far I caught its musing flow.
With chasten’d heart, and self-accused,
I bless’d Him who, in forms of sense,
Or grand or lovely, has infused
For man redeeming influence.

XV.

For still, as taught bard’s earliest lays,
A spirit-life in Nature dwells,
And mystic power the soul doth raise
When sunset fades or ocean swells ;
And tender tones from stream and grove
With life’s pathetic memories blend,
And lift the heart through human love
To Him who is love’s source and end.

A DREAM-JOURNEY.

THE dog-star reigned, the pavement glared, the turf
With blackening throats gaped in the arid Park,
And the infrequent horseman in the Ring
Through clouds of drifting fiery dust bore on.
The lonely loungee at the Club out-spread
His *Times* for screen and dozed. The siren trilled
To roomy boxes and deserted stalls
In the lit "Garden," and tired London loosed
Her zone of occupation and drew breath.

'Twas in the cooler eve of such a day
I, mid reluctant lingerers, sat within
The Commons' House and heard our Rochford speak,—
Rochford who bore for years the laugh and taunt
Of those safe souls who deem Truth's only realm
The soil *they* tread, so mock the exploring heart
That puts to sea, braves famine, mutiny,
Storm, and dead calm until he stand at last
On a New World and scoffers learn to praise.

He spake ; no factious cry was on his tongue.
He stood as, mid two pausing hosts that lean
Upon their spears, the white-robed priest of peace.
Of Crime he spake—of Ignorance, nurse of Crime,
How well it fits the law, while branding wrong,
To teach the right and prove the hand that sways,
A parent's, not an executioner's.
And then, awhile diverging, he discoursed
Of private influence. "Cumbersome law moves slow,"
He cried, "but individual wills are swift.
How much were done did all whom God creates,
By ampler gifts, his trustees for the world,
Fulfil His ends, prepare the general mind
By fostering dews and beams of sympathy,
For seeds of grace and wisdom wasted else.

That were to hallow opportunity,
Take wealth into the service of the soul,
And make brief speech the immortal bond of hearts !
That were to live, and leave a deathless Good
To tell for ever after—we had been."

While thus he pleaded, on his tones we hung
Vigorous though sweet, and like a summer tide,
Calm but resistless. On a brow we gazed
Strife's dashings had but rounded into peace.
He ceased : a sympathetic murmur rose,
And all men for the time felt kin to Man.

Wending my homeward way, I pondered long
The fate that held my friend—though born of such
As love and serve the hour—apart and set
For nobler use ; the mystery that veiled
His later youth, unlifted even for me
Who read his breast, returned upon my thought ;
Nor passed these musings till Sleep's magic hand
Wove them into the texture of a dream.

Meseemed 'twas morning and I tracked my friend
Where London's mighty heart pours populous life
Through all our England's iron veins and nerves.
I saw the harnessed terror—Pegasus,
Subdued at last by mortals—belch forth flame
And draw his conquerors.

Forth by valleyed cots
Nested in roses, and by brooks that roved
Singing along a land where all was fair,
By green corn rippled by the dappling sky,
We flew ; anon, by hills with wooded brows
Gazing in rivers, and by all delights
That cry to Man—"Live nobly, we are thine !"

On, on we sped until, oh strange, I found
By slow degrees the landscape and all forms

Lessen and dwarf to their own miniatures !
Voices to whispers ebbed ; our Pegasus
Stifled his snort, and the long bulk he drew
Slid tremulous on its hesitating wheel.
To one who questioned why, my friend replied,
“ Behold the fragile city of Pretence,
Bright, as you see, with plaster and gilt domes ;
And lest its basements crumble and the whole
Shocked city perish, we approach it thus.”
This said, we stopped, and Rochford took his way.

And then, methought, not tarrying in that place,
He got to horse and rode by villas pert
With stucco ; self-dubbed halls in boastful plots ;
By last-year towers 'mid shrubs that wear the lime
Scarce dried, for badge ; where the nailed ivy spreads
Not from but by the wall—toy homes that mock
Albion's gray keeps and bosomed seats of old.

For here reigns Lilliputus o'er the realm
Of pigmy folk, attenuate forms that Life
Disbands from her strong ranks, who counterfeit
The world's large action in a dwindled sphere.
From substance too remote to know their race
Phantasmal, pleased they dwell and chiefly prize
What holds of essence least. Thought's weighty gold
Is beat to phrase—the coin of petty souls.
Him Honour tends whose cousin ages back,
Cousined a hero ; shrewd Diplomacy
Knits brows—at whist ; the Exchequer is the pool ;
The veteran soldier gossips—of parades ;
Beau Nash is Chamberlain ; Egeria sits
Beside a Spa ; no eagle-angers gripe
Their prey with talons here nor fright with scream,
But spleens buzz gnat-like ; hearts that throb are banned ;
And interdicts are tinkled from small bells ;
A peal would shake the belfry.—Such the place
That deems its bounds the World's—that Wisdom takes

A moment in his hand, with leisure eye
Scans, and sets down, and muses—"These be men!"

He rides ; trim lawns and stuccoed halls and towers
Fleet, vanish : into widening life he rides
Up a steep track. By hemming ridge to left
That breasts the billowy clouds, and by the vale
Rightward that drinks their gloom, and by the burst
Of level rains, he knows God's world again.

Pour, pour !—The dusty woodbine from the hedge
Again shall tempt the bee ; the wild thyme parched,
As hearts recal first love, remember Spring
And shed lost odours ; patriarch oaks, like chiefs
That pine in Courts, catch the old note of storms,
Fling wrestling arms out, don their prime anew,
And pay more homage to the invaded Sun
Than hailed his pomp.

Still up ; but lo, the assault
Slackens. Yon branching rose, light's pennon, streams
From the cot-side and drenched in watery rays,
Signals a triumph. Soon the white-walled hut
On the bald height juts flashing like a cliff
Of Day and the Dark sweeps it like a sea.
Break the cloud-squadrons, burst the lancing rays
Till the King-Orb stands forth, and all the vale,
His emerald cup, with mantling glory brims.
And as when heavy judgments break the doors
Of proud hearts inwards, pure forgotten youth,
With primal airs of faith and impulse high,
Pours through the beach ; so when that tempest past,
The world lay re-baptized and smiled to heaven.

A crowning plane of road, a region mute
And nearest to the sky, where babbling rills
Intrude not, nor the social bleat of fields.
The lonely bird, out on the seas of air,
Rounds that dumb head-land quick and dives for home,

And hermit Nature, left in silence—prays.
Such Rochford's track, and there, with reverent hoof,
Tuned to the rhythmic breeze that rose and fell,
His courser paced—paced through the listening wood
And near the verge where ether laves the cape,
Till on the left, by gradual slope, it blends
With fair humilities of mead and stream.
Then by a lodge whose panes fond creepers twined
And let the light in greenly, paused the steed,
Scarce conscious of the rein, and through the gate
Bore to the valley.

Down and gently down
Where the firs lead, and downward till you wind,
Rewind, and there it lies in nooky rest,
Discovered not proclaimed, the manor hall.
Most fair it lies, most meek, nor boasteth aught ;
But, hushed on Beauty's bosom, wins a joy
From her calm smile. In front the gravel sweep
Falls 'twixt sheaved roses, red, and white in turn,
And near, a dial marks where happy hours—
Content that they have flowered there—glide away.

The cedar and the chestnut on the lawn
Pitch tents of shade : twin oaks, that once were young
And knew the lawn a chase, stretch watchful arms
By the house southward. Mating with their height
You learn its own ; else, nestling mid the hills
And flanked by homely wall where peach and plum
Swell, and the ruddy cherry fires the green,
You guess not the hall's stature, nor perceive
How with liege right it sways yon stream-fed glen
And basking hamlet, nor how all the woods
Of sloping beech press downward for its smile.

So shows the stone pile outward ; how within ?—
For Rochford, now afoot, yon white-haired man
Essays the unyielding door ; the traveller's hand

Aids him and back the heavy portal swings
 As for its lord ; and then with gleeful cry
 The old man sped, and straight a close-capped dame
 Entered with welcome. This returned, she told
 How brave Sir Hugh—who was his niece's heir
 And owned the place—was absent ; absent too
 His daughter Rose, who had no depth of leaf,
 And yet was fragrant—mystery of dreams,
 I knew her though unseen ! The clanging bars
 Fell while the matron spoke, the shutters furled
 And the glad day burst on the startled room,
 Crying—" 'Tis Summer !"

And Day bathed the walls
 Of oak with bronzy gold ; the mantel-piece—
 A quaint device of Tritons that up-bore
 A galley beaked with outspread oars for ledge—
 Glowed like an altar and, above, for saints,
 By fame or beauty canonised, was ranged
 A pictured ancestry.

What eyes of power
 Bend from yon casque and shaggy wealth of hair !
 A copse of locks and beard through which the brow,
 Nostril and lip scarce glint. You know the soul
 But by one outlet ; but you know it well.—
 A soldier he ; who next ?—" Admiral, what cheer ?"
 His glance frank, free, adventurous, piercing far,
 Gives the face motion and his sharp bold chin
 Cleaves seas of danger.—Near him, staid, with mouth
 Curved, keen, and close compressed—a war steed reined
 To keep the paces of a civic show—
 Sits my Lord Keeper.—His proud blood restrained
 Broke bounds in her his child : her spacious brows
 Rise like an arch triumphal through whose gates
 Wreathed conquerors sweep, while all the crowd stands
 awed.
 Her foot reverts upon her terrace stair,

But her gaze fronts you ; so she stepped at last
Back o'er Death's threshold, nor deranged her wont
To meet him, but with life-ward eyes went in.

Her softened miniature in gayer mood
Her grand-child note—she with the powdered hair
Who smiles and twirls a rosebud. Does she mock
Her Cousin—the grave youth with ruffled hand
Poised on his sword-hilt ? Laughs her ripening lip,
“ Favour you hold deceitful, beauty vain,—
So young, sir, and quote Proverbs ! ”—In front rank
He fell at Preston ; two years later, she
In the far South—for wise physicians hoped
Much from the clime—let all the loosened leaves
Of life drop, smiling.

Near her—here my gaze
Grew fixed like Rochford's, for there shone a face
That seen, all others died, like stars in dawn.
Paint it in *words* ! Say not though tints of gold
Halo her tresses ; tax not for those orbs
The Southern heaven that glows, one amethyst,
In the tranced lake ; demand no virgin rose
Whose lips the last shower opened for the hue
Or scent of hers ; if ivory hint her brow,
If snow-peaks tinged with dawn belie her skin,
If that ærial foot might press a cloud
And find it sure, yet say not !—These are hers,
Her forms—not she !—the channel that she fills
And makes all verdant, the transparent garb
Her spirit moulds and shines through, palace porch
Most graced, least noted, when it frames the Queen.

Oh, eyes of purest peace ! Oh, mouth, whose smile
Gleams through some sweet grief, as a moon just risen,
Bound for the zenith, peers through dews of earth !
Oh compromise 'twixt life divine and ours !—
Her, angels claim by essence ; men—by love ;

If Nature's instinct prompt her to the skies,
Earth grasps her robe of pity, and she stays.

So did I reach her soul through face and form,
Or if not wholly thus, through Rochford's heart ;
For in my vision, though his lips were closed,
His thoughts were vocal, and along the air,
Hushed and enamoured, breathed a strain like this—

“ Again with thee ! If he may say—*again*—
Who never left thee, but through all the heats
And dusty roads of life has travelled still
Anear thy memory. So the wayfarer
Whose course lies by a river—though the screen
Of mural cities hide it, or at times
Bleak paths strike upward or aslant—recurs
To its fair sweep, descries it from the height,
Or, sudden issuing from the bosky shades,
Breaks on it blue with heaven and swift with joy
And feels his blood flow like it ; and at night
Still hears its current, and then sleeps with thanks
That he *shall* hear it—till both reach the sea.

“ Yet with thee more than all, here where that spring
Of memory rose—the spring that feeds a life.

“ Oh, parted, present days ! Oh, days that love
Touched, and they grew immortal, that all change
Leaves fadeless, that approach not nor recede,
Nor grow nor lessen in my course ! So holy,
They died not but were rapt to the heart's heaven !
Thence, near as in the past, serene they shine
And equi-distant from all time below.”

“ And was she then ”—I whispered—“ so beloved,
So loving ? ” For awhile, he gazed on me
And saw my heart was reverent ; then, adown
The glen-like silence, flowed his answer—thus :—

"She met me young, she drew me to her height,
And made me free of fate. As from a peak
One stands in light and sees the rack below,
I stood o'er chance ; she beamed through all my sphere,
And every point of life she struck, turned gold.

"She met me flushed with powers that yearned for proof,
Nor recked of use. With prodigal hand I bore
The wine of youth on high to quaff or spill.
She showed the sacred symbol on the cup,
And if the draught, else squandered, was poured out
In pure libration, if the gods approved,
If on their shrine, redeemed, the chalice lay ;
'Twas she that led me to the altar's foot
And, following her, I came in sight of heaven.

"She met me drifting through a haze of creeds
By earth engendered, while from looming rocks
Athwart the narrow channel of my course,
Confusing voices all of peril told,
Of guidance—none. With her, Belief was born
Of life—the blossom of a root below ;
Grace was Christ's nature quickening in her own,
And Faith the natural throbbing of Love's heart.
Love God and show that love by love to Man.
Love God, the source of love ; love God the Son,
His love expressed. The love that flows from both,
The Spirit love. The pure by sympathy,
The bad in pity love and strive to win.
This was her creed, and with its single light
She burst the haze and led me like a star.

"She came to glad ones, and their mirth grew praise,
To mourners, who took comfort nor believed
Aught that had shared one kind with her could die ;
The thralls of Mammon in his darkest cells
Knew by some brightening chink the time she passed ;
And stern breasts, fronting life, as towers a sea,

And prisoning some diviner self within,
Were fain to show it when her lute-like tones
Wooed the fair captive, and the sullen gloom
Grew radiant with an out-looking soul.

“Vain, vain the love, though vaunted, that devotes
All to its idol, and the idol mean
That would absorb all worship! Sand-like hearts
That least repay love’s dew, absorb them most.
But, oh, her heart, nor beam nor rain might touch,
But that they drew some fragrance forth to blend,
With all the air and make a common joy.
And, as who sees a lily—not alone
Discerns itself, but pictures innocence,
And, as who lights on violets—yearns to friends
And breathes an odour sweeter than the flower’s;
So, they who held her dearest—held more dear
What made her so and through her human love,
As though a grove that endeth in a shrine,
Passed on to God’s.”

A space, we both were mute.
Then I—“What hidden influence has moved
And shaped thy life, I see; why ’mid all taunts
Thou still wast patient, in all strife serene
And meek in triumph.”—“She had borne with me,”
He answered, “and should I not bear with men?
And if I fell not, think I scarce was tried.
Renown, power, pleasure, all Temptation’s spells,
That oft beset the best, were rent for me.
She loved me—what was left for fear to prompt?
She loved me—what was left for hope to claim?”

“Oh, still may He from whom that love out-breathed—
One with his own, consenting to his will,
Guide thy soul by it, till its cycle close
And all thy being lapse complete in Him!”

"Amen," he echoed and "amen," and then,
 As he receded, softly came—"amen,"
 And softer till his form and voice dissolved
 Together, and the holy trance was done.

There fell a hush : then, all the sights and sounds
 Of common day had gradual leave to be,
 And from the core and inmost ring of life,
 Through all its widening circles, I came forth
 Unto the Senses—man's external gates
 Where-through the din of mingling mortal ends
 Swells to a roar and drowns the voice within.

Again 'twas morning, London ; and the wheel
 Of daily things brought letters and the news—
 The record broad of nations and of men—
 "The War," "the Prorogation"—"Viscount Thane
 Received a numerous——" "Unexpectedly,
 After last night's debate, its ornament,
 Rochford, left town"—

For where?—The scribe saith not
 For Scotland's lochs or moors? For laughing France?
 Or, for the glacier wall that cries afar
 To the rapt pilgrim in another land—
 "I am the buttress of the dome of God"?
 Or, for some nearer yet more sacred haunt
 Like that I saw in sleep?—It might be so.

LOVE'S VICTORY.

I WAS a bard :—she listened to my lay
 As there her questioning soul had answer found.
 She stooped to pluck my wild flowers on the way
 Fancies that teem from the prolific ground
 In the heart's solstice,—in whose inner day
 Through all the pleasant paths of earth we wound.

And sometimes through her music of delight
An undersound of sadness softly stole,
And floated, 'twixt the fountain pure and bright
Of her deep joy and heaven, a cloud of dole
That almost seemed relief ; for scarce below
The noon of rapture is allowed the soul.

Hence even in life's summer, sunbeams throw
Shades on the very path they glorify,
And ecstasy would perish but for woe.

I asked not if she loved me ; for reply
To every doubt, I read her glance and tone
And made them oracles of destiny.

They whispered love :—I deemed that love my own ;
Nor guessed that in the mirror of my song
She saw an idol face to me unknown,

Nor that the chords of my devotion, strung
To feeling's highest tension for her sake,
And on whose notes with breathless hush she hung,

Were prized for memories which they did awake—
To her an echo what to me was life.
O, God, the strings that quivered would not break !—

He came ! Can I forget that inward strife
Which made me calm ?—The mightiest grief is dumb.
They met :—he clasped her,—called her plighted wife !

A frost was in that moment to benumb
My very sense of anguish—and I smiled.
Freed by despair—what after-pang could come ?

She was his own,—both, Love's. They roamed the wild
And knew not it was bleak :—the wooded dell
They called not fair ; for love had reconciled

And blent all difference. From their spirits fell
A glow that bathed creation. Where they stood
Light was their shadow :—bliss unspeakable

Became at once their being and its food :—
The world they did inhabit was themselves ;
And they were Love's,—and all their world was good !

As o'er a barren reef that sea-ward shelves
Waves dash, their gladness sported o'er my fate ;
But in the abyss no line of pity delves

Lay the wrecked hope which nought could re-create—
At least I deemed so then : and yet we parted
With blessings, and her eyes were dim with tears.

She told me I had been her friend true-hearted—
The friend she would recal in other years.
These came ; and when the storm was spent there darted

Over my sombre deep, as from the spheres,
The memory of those words, at first revealing
More present gloom from all the past endears.

In time, their light and beauty o'er me stealing,
Softened despair to grief ; and in its dew
My withered heart put forth one bud of feeling.

I dared not hope its life :—fierce tempests blew
From the cold east of Youth in day's decline,
And shook its tender petals :—still it grew !

It grew and blossomed to a hope divine :—
I might be like her in her nature's worth ;
I might live *for* her though she was not mine !

From her each better impulse should take birth—
For her my song should raise and cheer mankind,
And I would sow her influence through the earth.

And, as by great attraction are combined
All kindred essences—as waters blend
With waters, flame with flame, and, though confined

By bounds material, each to other tend,—
Released from the division of our clay,
Again might be united friend with friend.

For then, immortal and beyond decay,
The store of love partaken richer grows :
Its flame erst lit for one, to all gives day !

O ye whose hearts in happy love repose,
Your thankful blessings at its footstool lay,
Since faith and peace can issue from its woes !

THREE DREAMS OF DEATH.

SUPPOSED TO BE RELATED IN A LAST ILLNESS BY A GIRL
TO HER BETROTHED.

“OUR death is but the shadow of our life,”
—Thus glided to his ear her healing strain—
“The image and the echo of our souls.
Thrice have I seen the phantom in my sleep,
And with my spirit’s changes changed the form.

“A child, I first beheld it !—’Twas, methought,
Mid-day, and with my playmates, hand in hand,
We roved through the rich pastures : now we ran ;
Now paused, entangled by the playful snare
Of the long grass ; now on some shaded knoll
Lay prone and mimicked sleep : and when we rose,
An island city glittered in our sight.
Like to substantial rainbows shone its walls ;
Its gates were pearl, and every pinnacle
Crowned with a planet : by a lucid sea
Whose waters chorused joy the isle was zoned,
Their burthen—‘ Welcome to the happy shore !’

“‘On to the happy city !’—But I stayed
By a rose-laden hedge to pluck its flowers
And wreath them with green bands ; when as I bent
The sward grew darkened.—‘ Tarry, comrades dear !’
—But no voice answered ; and their distant forms
Died in the dim mist from my straining sight !

"The dimness grew ; it girt the city round
As mourning robes a bride. The dimness grew,
And filmed the star-crowned spires, till the last ray
Swam faint on the dense billows and then sank.

"The sheeted dimness spread from earth to sky,
And gathered central substance till it loomed
Like Night on twilight wings. The world was dumb.
A chill smote every sense ; and then I felt
The Presence lived. With its enfolding breath
All motion froze, and in my rigid clay
My soul shrank helpless. Nearer heaved the mass.
I knew it close ; and in its bending front
There glared two lurid depths, more terrible
Than midnight to remorse. I shuddering, saw ;
I loathed but looked : till, desperate with dread,
Life flooded back, and in the Horror's breast
I plunged with one wild cry—and, lo, 'twas day !

"Four years had borne their record, and were mute :
The fifth was in its spring. As with the year,
So with my life ; over its flower-like brim
A glory peered and nestled in its depths.
With timid joy the cup of hope unclosed
And drank a rain of light.—I dreamed again.

"A banquet 'neath a purple roof of sky
O'er-arching crystal walls—a floor of gems
Where white feet dipped in beams—an odour fine
As sighs of roses burthened with their sweets—
And melody like beauty's soul in sound !

"So grew the vision.—Through the spacious hall
A concourse streamed, group after group, like waves
Crested with sunlight. Then they ranged apart.

"Unseen, I saw. From lips invisible
A welcome rang—and issued into sight

A wondrous pair : of massive structure he,
And towering skyward, like a son of earth
Who challenged Jove for sire. His bulk entwined
The woman like a column-clasping vine.
His hand a goblet raised—a wreath, her own.
Her head in languid majesty declined,
He bore her on. With eye intent she gazed
Upon the mirroring pavement, proud to bear
Her jewelled sandal, and reflect the limb
That shone like pillared moonlight in a flood.

“ Now quicklier bounded Music’s pulse, and Sound
Chased its own echo. With responsive feet
The twain swept on ; and at a fuller gush
From founts harmonious, in breathless rounds
Revolved their eddying steps ; when suddenly
With clashing cymbals darted in their wake
A train of nymphs. Thrice through the space pursued,
She furl’d her floating tresses on his breast,
And pillowed there ; but in her upward eye
There flashed such bliss as she had mortgaged heaven’s
To buy a moment’s here !

“ An interval

Of silence and on strode an armèd shape
Glittering and plumed. Followed, in azure robes,
A line of glorious forms. Their brows discrowned
Were regal still. Some darted eager eyes
Into the distance ; some with inner sight
Passed musing by ; and some from smiling orbs
Cast mirth for largess. On the warrior’s arm
Soft fell the woman’s hand. Its touch, though light,
Thrilled through his mail. He from her comrade took
The cup, and pledged her. Then, alluring beams
She bent on those behind. With gaze entranced
Some met her own ; others, in brief delight,
Paused and went by : the remnant looked beyond.

“ Why looked beyond ? From a dissolving mist
Two forms emerged. The first with foot advanced
And poised upon a sphere, her arm upraised,
With steady lustre in her mien, her brows
Domed with the laurelled darkness of her hair—
Silent, claimed homage. Like Incarnate Rest
The second stood : her hands were meekly crossed ;
And in her aspect dwelt such solemn joy
As martyrs feel just entered into bliss.

“ Before the proud shape sank the mailèd chief.
Those clad in azure robes with mute suspense
Regarded both ; but soon the most part knelt
Where knelt the chief ; yet oft regretful eyes
Turned on the placid meekness they disowned.

“ A clarion rang. Then vanished with her train
The laurelled maid ; and when the notes expired,
Deep silence fell—such hush as comes between
The ripples of a summer sea when dreams
The stirless zephyr, and the stars lean forth
From violet barks at anchor in the air.

“ Round the benignant Presence suppliant bowed
The faithful few. She raised them with a smile ;
Then fixed her gaze on the embowering woods.
Forth from their shade a youthful hunter sprang
With levelled spear ; when, 'neath her glance his arm
Straight as his weapon curved, the point declined,
And bending on the shaft as on a staff,
Intent he mused beside a rural shrine.

“ A peasant maid a brimming flagon bore
Fresh from the forest well. Her yielding form
The load swayed earth-ward, and with tedious step
She neared the holy place ; but there, as serf
Enfranchised by a monarch's touch, she stood,
Girt round her pliant frame her loose attire,
And with her vessel, burthensome no more,

Crowned her fair tresses.—Lo ! a sylvan nymph,
The Genius of a consecrated spring !

“ The blind, the dumb, the needy, and the sick—
All that were thralls unto infirmity
Crept on that forest pathway ; and methought,
Each as he passed into the smile unseen
Which sphered the sainted Presence, in amaze
Acquired the good he lacked. The grateful hymn
Burst from bound lips,—the visual scarf of Night
Fell from freed eyes, that paid with their own beams
Those of the daylight—weariness that sank
On the green turf, smiled and became repose,—
And from each wayside tree whose liberal branch
Bent with its blessings, hunger plucked its feast.

“ I saw, and to the fair Enchantress turned ;
When, with such tones as quicken in the heart
From lips that vibrate on the strings of fate,
She called me to her. I in mute consent
Waved to her side :—but interposed a shade,
And in its depth there stood a gaunt form pale
But regal, swathed in robes of lustrous white
Which took no shadow in their folds. His brow
Was circled by a wefty coronet
Which had a ghastly shining, and was set
With rims of stars, orb-sockets blank and rayless.
Such clear and wintry light as northward dawns
On plains where war has revelled, filled his glance.
One hand his garment bore ; the other gleamed
Like some wan lamp that skirts a haunted waste,
And hints the after-horror. Dumb I stood
And statue-like as he, when round me twined
A loving arm. The Spectral Dread dissolved
To gracious pity ; in his softened mien
I caught the reflex of the maiden’s face,
And knew him for her brother.—So exhaled
The phantom ; at the Guardian Spirit’s feet

Prostrate I sank !—A moment, and the Sun
Peered through my curtains with his laughing gaze,
Like friend who welcomes us when peril's past."

She paused awhile ; but when his questioning eye
Sought her theme's moral, in divinest tones
Like ambushed flute's, when trampling steeds no more
Wake the road's stony echoes, thus resumed :—

" It was an autumn eve, and in its calm
Pressed on my soul sad mysteries of life—
Vicissitude that snaps the links of joy,
The canker self that eats the bloom of faith,
And death that gleans the unblighted ears of love.
With grief came weariness, and on the breast
Of sleep my sorrow sighed itself to peace.

" An island floated in a sea of mist,
And the low chorus of invisible waves
Swelled on my ear. In the Isle's centre sprang—
A limbless trunk from the deep root of Night—
An ebon rock. There throned in majesty,
Solemn but not austere, the maiden sat—
My late deliverer. In a stole attired
Of virgin white and crowned with amaranth,
Serene she sat.—And to my glance was given
A power to apprehend all distant forms
And search all secret hearts.

" Round the rock's base
Defiled a various crowd. Conspicuous
On lofty car, whereto in willing yoke
Stout sons of toil he had redeemed were bound,
A champion stood. ' Reign thou and be our Lord '—
Burst from the throng ; and in the heart which beat
Till then for freedom, woke the thirst of power.
The queenly glance was on him !—Noiselessly
Through the dividing lane of living men,
And shrouded by a haze, the car bore on

To the mysterious deep. The chief had passed
And left the world a Patriot's stainless name.

"What sudden glory, like a sapphire rift
Athwart a gray monotony of cloud,
Contrasts the sterile earth? What heralds sent
From self-subsisting affluence of light
Visit our pensioned world?—O, happy pair!
Beneath our steps are crushed the casual flowers
Which theirs bequeath as memories. In the beams
Of their own eyes they moved; by their own breath
The air grew fragrant; while their blended tones
Hushed all earth's meaner music to despair!
And thus in haughty bliss they passed along
The alien haunts of men.

"With saddened heart
I watched their course. No substance has the joy
That casts no shadow. Up the walling hills
They rose, not climbed. Upon a pinnacle,
Beneath which yawned the vapourous deep, they stood.
Then through the obscure waved the white sceptred arm;
I looked;—he stood alone! The watery moon
Peered through her veil on a dumb agony!

"The years to me were moments. He came down
With a bowed frame as one whom Fate hath brought
In conflict to her knee, but spared to crush.
Faltered his step; and on a peasant's arm
Silent he leaned, turned on him wistful eyes
And sighed—'I thank thee, brother!'—Forth he went,
Alone, but not companionless. The winds,
Plaintive but sweet, set all the woe of life
To soothing melodies. The dusky moon
Rose o'er the horizon pregnant with the weight
Of human care; but higher soared and rained
The light of heavenly faith. The sombre pines
Wove o'er him pensive shades; but through them
gleamed

The eternal azure. Then this ministry
Of natural teaching passed into his heart,
And issued thence in song. The pausing world
Hung o'er the wisdom sorrow had inspired.
Earth, crown thy bards with yew and not with bays !
The tree whose fruit is immortality
Is rooted in the grave !

“ As one who glides
From old cathedral's silence to the din
Of dusty day beyond, my spirit lost
The fulness of his lyre, and tuneless cries
Jarred on its echoes. Here, for stones misdeemed
Gems in the twilight, wrangled brethren twain ;
Here with lean hands some scooped the shore for wells,
And drank the brackish tide that fed their thirst ;
There others toiled to rear a pyramid
From ever-shifting sands : while sharp laments
And muttered groans composed a cloud of sound
Which the tired wings of air bore faintly by.

“ But, lo, the murmur dies ! Through all the rank
Unseen, and with averted face, she passed
From her vacated throne ; the Angel passed !
Sleep fell upon her pathway like a dew.
The striving and the weary sank to rest
Each on his fellow's arm. In dreams they strayed
Through pastures of the morning, while afar
Gleamed the bright turrets of the enchanted isle
I erst beheld : and with a smile they sighed
‘ On to the happy city,—home at last ! ’

“ To me the spirit turned. A rocky ledge
Sustained her marble arm, and on its curve
Rested her sweet pure face. Her looks were words,
And called me to her side ; but love intense
Bowed down my faltering limbs, and my rich heart
Poured tears for an oblation. ‘ Rise ! ’ she said,—

And parted o'er my brow the veiling hair
As a fond mother doth her favourite's :—
' We love each other ;—I will come for thee ! ' ”

.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SUMMER.

“ STARTLE not my lonely gloom,
Shine not in my darkened room,
Spirit of the Summer !
Winter hoar and Autumn sere
Shall from me have warmer cheer
Than thou, radiant comer !

“ Cold—with icicles for hair—
And Decay—who scarce can bear
Weight that inly presses—
Less do ye offend my sight
Than this vision of delight
With her false caresses !

“ Give me good that will endure,
Or the grief that mocks at cure ;
But no passing splendour—
Cruel mother of a bliss
Which when rising to her kiss
She doth so surrender !

“ Hence then, Summer ! though thy breath
Woo with fragrance, and thy wreath
Ransack Nature's treasure—
Though the enamoured zephyrs creep
Round thy robe until they sleep
Swooning with the pleasure !

“ Scarce dost thou attain thy prime
Ere thine envious servant, Time,
Narrows daylight's glory ;

Flowery meshes that entwine
Thy feet, are but too apt a sign
Of thy beauty's story."

Then, with voice that did exhale
Tenderness, She chid my wail :—
" Nought that's bright should perish !
Though my form desert thine eyes,—
Know the beauty never dies
That the heart can cherish.

" Love me !—Though I quit thy side,
In thee shall my power abide ;
And, my grace recalling,
Thou shalt loveliness perceive
In the October rose, and grieve
Gently for its falling.

" Friends that gather round thy hearth
When the snows envelope earth
Shall have greeting fonder,
If in summer twilights ye
Mutely strayed, and tenderly
In their hush did ponder.

" Angel faces Youth beholds
When the veil of Time unfolds,
Though so soon it closes,
Once beheld are known till death ;
And on Memory's bosom Faith
Placidly reposes.

" Outward beauty thus awakes
Human love ; and but forsakes
That the inward yearning
By its passion may create
Glories rarer than await
Mortal sight's discerning."

BY THE SEA.

THE twilight fell ; a glimmering chain of lamps
 Defined the crescent beach ; with sullen moan,
 Before the cliff's unvanquished citadel,
 Retired the sea ; the fisher's lantern gleamed
 On the moist shore, and from his stranded boat
 Trailed the rent net, entangled with the weed.

Opened behind an ancient, low-roofed street
 With laboured windings. Tapers in small panes
 Doled parsimonious light on scanty wares—
 On toys that wore their cobwebs moodily
 Like mourners at a birthday's funeral,
 On fruits that warned the taste they once enticed,
 And faded ribbons—silent homilies
 On maiden pride. A straggling group whose speech
 Fell brief and dull, whose unexpectant steps
 Loitered abroad to shun unsocial homes,
 Divided as I passed. There came no sound
 To break the torpor till, with pant and scream,
 Clanged the steam monster on its iron road,
 Angering the hazy distance from its sleep.
 Oh, harsh Reality, Life's fair Ideal
 Fled from thy frown ! Stretched on the sombre coast,
 A log my pillow, listlessly I shook
 The sand to sand and cried—" 'Tis fit these grains
 Within a glass should measure vanity."

Here, as I lay and caught the fretting wash
 Of the tired ebb, a flickering watery beam—
 As if a wandering finger of veiled light
 Felt for its way—played tremulous on the sand,
 And made me ware of Moon-rise. Like the Angel
 That overcame the Dragon, coil by coil
 Did she unwind of vast and tortuous cloud,
 Then free emerged and stainless, filling space
 With the mild awe that breathes from loveliness.

Higher she rose. Gaunt peaks, from depths of gloom,
 Smit by her smile, smiled back. Beneath her spread
 The palpitating waves—a shining track,
 Leading to lands as lovely as her light,
 Across a night of sea. Bright rose the masts
 Of stranded boats as they were moored beside
 The happy Avalon. Roof, lattice, wall
 Caught the soft glory, save where shadows fell
 Deep as remembered love and still as peace.

So, by one heavenly influence, common forms
 Put on ethereal semblance ; and methought—
 “ Thus our familiar life the radiant Soul
 Exalts and hallows ; nought so mean but, touched
 By that essential beauty, grows divine.”

THE DEATH-RIDE.

A TALE OF THE LIGHT BRIGADE.

“ WE sat mute on our chargers, a handful of men,
 As the foe’s broken columns swept on to the glen,
 Like torn trees when the whirlwind comes ;
 Cloven helm and rent banner grew dim to our ken,
 And faint was the throb of their drums.

“ But, no longer pursued, where the gorge opens deep
 They halt ; with their guns they crowd level and steep ;
 Seems each volley some monster’s breath,
 Who shows cannon for teeth as he crouches to leap
 From his ambushed cavern of death.

“ Their foot throng the defile, they surge on the bank ;
 Darts a forest of lances in front ; o’er each flank
 Peer the muskets, a grisly flock :
 They have built their live tower up, rank upon rank,
 And wait, fixed, for an army’s shock.

“ Far in front of our lines, a dot on the plain,
Mute and moveless we sat till his foam-flecked rein
At our side gallant Nolan drew.

‘ They still hold our guns, we must have them again,’
Was his message—‘ Advance, pursue ! ’

“ Pursue them !—What, charge with our hundreds the foe
Whose massed thousands await us in order below !

Yes, such were his words. To debate
The command was not ours ; we had but to know
And, knowing, encounter our fate.

“ We ride our last march ; let each crest be borne high !
We raise our last cheer ; let it startle the sky
And the land with one brave farewell ;
For soon never more to our voice shall reply
Rock, hollow, fringed river, or dell.

“ Let our trump ring its loudest ; in closest array,
Hoof for hoof, let us ride ; for the Chief who to-day
Reviews us—is Death the Victorious :
Let him look up to Fame, as we perish, and say,
‘ Enrol them, the fall’n are the glorious ! ’

“ We spur to the gorge ; from its channel of ire
Livid light bursts like surf, its spray leaps in fire ;
As the spars of some vessel staunch,
Bold hearts crack and fall ; we nor swerve nor retire,
But in the mid-tempest we launch.

“ We cleave the smoke-billows, as wild waves the prow ;
The flash of our sabres gleams straight like the glow
Which a ploughing keel doth break
From the grim seas around, with light on her bow,
And light in her surging wake.

“ We dash full on their guns : through the flare and the
roar
Stood the gunners bare-armed ; now they stand there no
more ;
The war-throat waits dumb for the ball ;

For those men pale and mazed to the chine we shore,
And their own cannons' smoke was their pall.

"That done, we're at bay ; for the foe with a yell
Piles his legions around us. Their bayonets swell
Line on line ; we are planted in steel :
'Good carbine ! trusty blade ! Each shot is a knell,
Each sword-sweep a fate ; they reel !'

"One by one fall our men, each girt with his slain,
A death-star with belts. 'Charge ! we break them !'—In
vain !

From the heights their batteries roar ;
The fire-slucies burst ; through that flood, in a rain
Of iron, we strike for the shore.

"Thunder answers to thunder, bolts darken the air,
To breathe is to die ; their funeral glare
The lit hills on our brave ones rolled :
What of that ? They had entered the lists with Despair,
And the lot which they met, they foretold.

"Comrade sinks heaped on comrade ! A ghastly band
That fell tide, when it ebbs, shall leave on the strand :
Of the swimmers who stemmed it that day
A spent, shattered remnant we struggle to land
And wish we were even as they."

Oh, Britain, my country ! Thy heart be the tomb
Of those who for thee rode fearless to doom,
The sure doom which they well fore-knew ;
Though mad was the summons, they saw in the gloom
DUTY beckon—and followed her through.

She told not of trophies,—of medal or star,
Or of Glory's sign-manual graved in a scar ;
Nor how England's coasts would resound
When brothers at home should greet brothers from war,
As they leaped upon English ground.

She told not of streets lined with life up to heaven,
One vast heart with one cry till the welkin is riven—

“Oh, welcome ye valiant and tried!”

She told not of soft arms that clasp the re-given ;
She only said, “Die!”—and they died.

Let Devotion henceforth Balaklava own
No less than Thermopylæ, meet for her throne ;

And thou, Britain—thou mother bereft—

By thy grief for the sleepers who hear not thy moan,
Count the worth of the sons thou hast left.

AN INVOCATION.

I HAD thy love ; whatever Fate
Has since denied, I'll not repine
What second joy could she create
Like that I knew when thou wast mine ?
His blessing take, his faults forgive,
If ever earthward bends thine eye,
Who, having loved thee, bears to live,
And, having lost thee, waits to die.

THOUGHTS ON THE RHINE.

ST GOAR.

A WINDY light, like a sonorous note
From Autumn's golden horn, plays round the steeps ;
And ruined Rheinfels—mindful of old days—
Smiles faintly to its challenge. In the plain
Sleeps the mild hamlet, by the river's song
Hushed to calm dreams. As close the folding clouds,
The riven walls, whose base soft creepers gird,
Change their harsh aspect for the mien of peace.—
Souls who have suffered in the strife of Time
And bear the scars upon your delvèd brows,

All is not lost if thus on lowly joy
 Ye can look kindly down. The grateful vales
 Shall cast their tendrils upwards, and entwine
 Your desolation with a wreath of love !

A CHURCH NEAR RHEINSTEIN.

Meek fane of prayer, that by the river's brink
 Dost offer salutation !—hills on hills
 Behind thee lift their violet peaks in air ;
 And at thy base the happy waters glass
 Thine image, like admiring souls that grow
 Akin to what they love ; and by thy porch
 Pass pilgrim-freighted ships.—Ah ! thus should Faith
 On Beauty's frontier dwell ; yet, not remote
 From Action's current, reconciling so
 Our daily life with thoughts that point beyond !

AN EVENING AT BINGEN.

The Year, now eight moons old, leans o'er the flood
 In a grave quiet. He has laid to heart
 The winds—at evening hushed, that vexed the morn—
 As he had heard December's shout from far.
 Yet is his mood resigned, for he has blessed
 The earth with beauty.—Thus we moralized.
 Feeling bred fancy ; filial fancy brought
 New stores to feeling, till the scene around
 Grew human like ourselves. The current sighed
 To think it might not tarry ; laden boughs—
 Like triumph smitten with the thought of death—
 Drooped over the green walls ; and sat sedate
 The hills, like elders that recall their youth.
 —Oh, change ! oh, time ! oh, mystery beyond !
 In silence passed we onward to the shore,
 And crossed the Nahe. Then, many a twinkling gleam
 Peered through quaint windows on the narrow street.
 The cheerful housewife plied her needle here ;

There at their evening meal, through open doors,
We looked on happy groups ; and from the road
Burst forth a manly song, in which were blent
A hundred voices. We were one in heart
With all we saw, and echoed all we heard.
Blest mystery that but subdues the soul
To soften it to concord, and with dews
Of sadness cherishes the growth of love !

A CHILD IN HEAVEN.

THOU, God on high, art love,
And do'st, by love's attraction, draw our souls,
Flitting in dusky circuit twixt the poles,
Up to their home above.

And, though we bear the weight
Of mortal nature, yet the loved and free
We follow with strong pinion back to thee
And look in at thy gate.

Lost one ! In sleep we rise
Into thy track and thy receding light
Pursue, till, pausing at the portal bright,
Thou gazest in our eyes.

"Be comforted," that mild,
Full heart-glance said ; "of human love the link
Stretches o'er death abyss, from brink to brink,
This angel is your child."

Then, with her brow still bent
On ours, she slowly lessened into bliss ;
As if to show she bore our mortal kiss
Into the firmament.

Nor was our gaze forbid
To watch her still ; for kneeling angels, crowned,
Having kissed her, parted where they zoned her round,
That she might not be hid.

As, after doubtful notes
That Music wakes ere she decides her lay,
On sudden up some dear frequented way
Of heavenly sound she floats,

And each awaiting heart
Thrills to remembered joy ; so, from the grace
And glory mantling those bright hosts, did start
Full many a well-known face.

Thy father's father, sweet,
She at whose knees thy mother lisped her prayer,
Bent their swift pinions from the throne to greet
Thy soul and guide thee there.

And some who left the way
Of life, while green, were there ; to whom 'twas given
To sink on its soft pastures after play,
To sleep—and wake in heaven.

And one not knit by blood,
Save souls have kinship, neared thee. In her eyes
Dwelt love so holy while on earth she stood,
They changed not for the skies.

Close, closer, form divine !
Here was thy life high, gracious, undefiled ;
The love that lit the parent heart was thine,
Now shine upon the child.

They stoop to us ; they pour
Their glances down, each glance too pure a ray
For our weak eyes ; the drooped lids fringe them o'er
And all dissolves away.

Oh, then, our thankful bliss
Burst forth, and the glad souls that people dreams
Fled from the awakening cry ! Our world was this,
Our light earth's common beams.

They slant upon the ground
Where, prone and torn, her wind-snapped dahlia lay ;
Where still the notes of Childhood's chorus sound,
Though one note is away.

Morn breaks its golden surge
Against the walls whence, with presaging eyes
She watched the spire-crowned hills ; morn rounds the
verge
Of shadow where she lies.

The night-hushed din of life
Thickens and swells ; but, from that better sphere
Our sleep unveiled, there flows, through all the strife
A voice intact and clear ;—

“ Love's very grief is gain ;
Thereby earth holier grows and heaven is nigher ;
Souls that their idols may not here detain,
Will follow and aspire.

“ Potent is Sorrow's breath
To quench Wrath's fever—check the rebel Will ;
Gaunt, starved Ambition in its path sees Death,
And the wild mien is still.

“ Sense has no charm or wile
To lure the heart ; it asks not if the road
Have shades to screen or odours to beguile ;
But—does it lead to God ?

“ Love, purity, repose,
Faith cherished, duty done and wrong forgiven—
Be these the garland and the staff of those
Who have a child in heaven.”

FOR A SILVER WEDDING.

TWENTY-FIVE years since ! That morn in May
Dearest, seems near as yesterday
 Hallowed by love and sacred sorrow ;
So be our years till life's downward light
 Fades in the dusk, so pure and brief,
 In which Faith reaches her hand to Grief
And scarce the Mourner has sighed—" 'tis night !"
 Than Angels cry—" 'tis morrow !"

A TRIBUTE.

To thee two gifts by the All-good were given—
To bless on earth, and then attract to heaven.

TO UNA.

WRITTEN AFTER THE COMPLETION OF SOME EARLY POEMS.

WHOSE lot so drear, it ne'er has known
A kindly smile, a cheering tone ?
The loneliest live not all alone.

Some form of love the darkest fate
Exists to bless and consecrate ;
And none are wholly desolate,

While 'midst Time's myriad hearts, *one* heart—
To which their own may all impart
Of care or hope—is set apart,

As was methinks thine own for me,
So rich in love and constancy ;
Although I so unworthy be.

It far exceeds my bounded lay,
Thy gentle goodness to convey—
Far more its blessings to repay.

Yet meet it seems, ere I repose
From happy labour, at its close
To tell how much to thee it owes ;

How much of love to all mankind,
By thine was cherished in my mind ;
One genial soul to all doth bind !

And thus, since from love's source doth rise
Our faith in noble destinies,
With yearnings pure that aggrandize

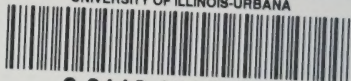
Desires and aims, else poor and base,
For selfish good, till these embrace
The far-off future of the Race ;

I may say in this song of mine,
There doth not live a better line
But owns an influence of thine !

I write but words, oh, fairest soul !
But on my heart—a living scroll—
Write thou thy nature, pure and whole.

THE END.

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS-URBANA



3 0112 124959716